A CRITICAL STUDY OF THE RE-ESTABLISHMENT OF BHIKKHUNĪ-SANGHA IN SRI LANKA

VEN. PUBBILIYE MAITHREE MOORTHREE

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of
The Requirement for the Degree of
Master of Arts
(Buddhist Studies)

International Master Degree of Arts Programme
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The Graduate School, Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, has approved this thesis as a part of education to its curriculum of the Master of Arts in Buddhist Studies.

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Abstract

The present thesis is divided into five chapters to cover all parts concerned with the topic. As is evident from the Sinhalese Chronicles the Bhikkhunī Order has survived more than 1200 years from its first inception in Sri Lanka in 236 B.C. In the second chapter it has been pointed out how the rulers and the people have supported the Bhikkhunīs all along. Also in the seccond chapter the reasons for the decline of the Bhikkhunī Order in Sri Lanka at the end of the Anurādhapura period in the 11th century are explained.

Chapter three of the thesis deals with the reestablishing of the Theravāda Bhikkhunī Order in Sri Lanka on March 12, 1998. Views for and against the reestablishing of the Order of Bhikkhunis of prominent Buddhist scholars and leading members of the Sangha have been stated in this chapter. They were clearly separated into the group of support and the group of objection. The arguments of both groups and the supporting factors to prove their views were quoted in detail. The common views of the Sri Lankan Sangha and the Buddhist lay people before and after the reestablishment of the Bhikkhunī Order in 1998 have also been included.

Chapter four of the thesis is concerned with the present situation of the Bhikkhunī Order. It is discussed in details how the Buddhist people of Sri Lanka are supporting the Order of Bhikkhunīs and how the Bhikkhunīs perform their religious and social work for the lay people. Other sub-topics discussed in this chapter are the relationship between Bhikkhunīs and the Buddhist lay people, the number of ordained Bhikkhunīs in Sri Lanka, the education of the Bhikkhunīs and problems concerning their education and full recognition by the leaders of the Sangha.

Chapter five summerises the preceding four chapters. Solutions for the problems concerning the reestablishmnent of the Bhukkhunī Order in Sri Lanka are suggested on the basis of the Pāli Vinaya Rules and suggestions for future research are made.

Acknowledgements

Several scholars helped me to complete this thesis in various ways. Some of them provided me with their valuable guidance; some helped me to find necessary books and documents, while some assisted me in various things. I offered them all my sincere and grateful thanks.

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I must emphatically express my thanks to the authors and writers of the books and the articles on which I depended in writing this thesis. It should be noted here that the articles on this issue written by Prof. Mrs. Hema Goonatilake and Mr. D. Amarasiri Weeraratne have been very helpful to the development of this thesis. I also gratefully acknowledge the help I received from Dr. Phrakhrukittiwaraporn, and Prof. Y. Karunadasa for giving me the opportunity to discuss and make some points of this work clear.

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Ven. Pubbiliye Maithree Moorthree
July 31, 2005

List of Abbreviation

AC	After Christ
BE	Before Christ
BJE	Buddha Jayanti Edition
CE	Christian era
DN	Dīgha Nikāya
Dpv	Dīpavamsa
DSM	Dasa-Sil-Mātā
DSMs	Dasa-Sil-Mātās
Mhv	Mahāvamsa

Other abbreviations:

Cpt.	Chapter
Ed.	Edited by
Etc.	Et cetera/ and others
Ibid.	ibiden/ in the same book
Op.cit.	opera citato
P(p).	Page (s)
Tr.	Translated
Vol (s)	volume(s)

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Chapter I

Introduction

1.1 Background and Significance of the Problem

Bhikkhunī Sangha was introduced to Sri Lanka during the reign of King Devānampiyatissa B.E.236-276[1] by Bhikkhunī called Sanghamittā, the daughter of Emperor Asoka and it flourished in the Kingdom of Anurādhapura for about 1200 years. With the fall of the Anurādhapura Kingdom to the South Indian *Cholian* invaders in the 11th Century B.E. and the annexation of the Anurādhapura Kingdom to the Hindu *Cholian* Empire, the Bhikkhunī Order disappeared and became defunct.[2] Not only the Bhikkhunī Order but also the order of ordained monks disappeared from Sri Lanka.[3]

After that the Great King Vijayabāhu B.E. 1632 drove away the *Cholian* invaders and revived the order of monks with the help of the monks from Burma.[4] In the Pāli Chronicle called Mahāvamsa, which makes a report of the revival of Bhikkhu Sangha, but makes no mention of any revival of the Bhikkhunī Order, which was not possible because there were no Buddhist nuns either in Burma, Siam (Thailand), Combodia, Laos and other Theravāda countries. Because of the disappearance of Bhikkhunī Order at that time, the Sangha (Monks) in Sri Lanka concluded that Bhikkhunī Order could not be re-established in accordance with the regulation laid down by the Buddha.

The Bhikkhunī Order was re-established in Sri Lanka on March 12 , 1998 by a group of Sri Lankan monks.[5] This re-establishment of the

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[1] Wilhelm Geiger, tr. **The Great Chronicle of Ceylon** (**Mahāvamsa**), (New Delhi: AES Press, 1993), pp. 88-90.

[2] Ibid., p.102

[3] Amarasiri Weeraratne, D., "Revival of the Bhikkhunī Order in Sri Lanka," **The Island Newspaper**, 4 April 1998, Retrieved 18 November 2003, < http://www.buddhanet.net>.

[4] Wilhelm Geiger, Op.cit., pp. 203-206

[5] Amarasiri Weeratatne,D., op.cit., (4th April 1998)

Bhikkhunī Order was done as required by the *Vinaya Pitaka* (The rules of discipline) is not clear and needs investigation.

According to the rules and regulations laid down by the Buddha for the ordination of Bhikkhunīs it is essential that the women who wish to be ordained had to receive ordination from the Bhikkhunīs and thereafter from Bhikkhus.[6]

According to the *Cullavagga* of *Vinaya Pitaka*, the Buddha gave permission to the effect that women can be ordained by monks only.[7] In this connection we had to find out if this permission granted by the Buddha was given before or after the ordination rules for Bhikkhunīs which require ordination by Bhikkhunīs and then by the Bhikkhus was already in existence.

The four Mahānāyakās (Leaders) of the main divisions of the Sangha in Sri Lanka do not accept the newly established Bhikkhunī Order, which was established in 1998.[8] They are of the view that the Bhikkhunī Order, which was not established in accordance with the Theravāda *Vinaya* rules, is a threat to the Buddhist Tradition.

According to the Theravāda tradition, a woman should first be ordained by Bhikkhunīs and then by the Bhikkhus. The method of obtaining higher ordination for a woman is known as *Atthavācika upasampadā* in which the ordination would be given first by Bhikkhunīs and then by Bhikkhus. As is understand that Bhikkhunīs are not any more available in all Theravāda Countries, the Mahānāyakās of Sri Lanka hold the view that the Bhikkhunī Order cannot be re-established untill the appearance of next Buddha.[9]

The Venerable Mahānāyaka of Asgiriya Chapter of Siyām Nikāya who is opposed to the re-establishment of Bhikkhunī Order as it goes against the Theravāda Vinaya tradition would, however, welcome the re-establishment of the Bhikkhunī Order if it were possible.[10]

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[6] I.B. Horner, tr., **The Book of The Discipline**, (Cullavagga), (Pāli Text Society: Oxford, 1992), vol.V, p.375.

[7] Ibid., p.357

[8] Amarasiri Weeratatne,D., op.cit., (4th April 1998)

[9] Amarasiri Weeratatne, D., "Revival of the Bhikkhunī Order in Sri Lanka," **The Island Newspaper**, 4 April 1998, Retrieved 18 November 2003, < http://www.buddhanet.net.

[10] Ibid.

Regarding this present issue of the Bhikkhunī Order, the Late Most.Ven. Madihe Paññasiha, the President of Sri Lanka Amarapura Mahā Sangha Sabā said, "It is clear that there is no room whatsoever for establishing Bhikkhunī Order in accordance with the Therevāda Vinaya rules. Although there are Buddhist nuns in Mahāyāna countries, the High Priests of all the five Theravāda countries do not recognized these nuns as being correctly ordained in accordance with Theravāda *Vinaya*. Therefore, the government and the general public of Sri Lanka were advised not to give recognition to the effort to re-establish Bhikkhunī Order which was established in 1998.[11]

After the new Bhikkhunī Order was re-established in 1998 in Sri Lanka, it had to face a lot of criticism at the beginning, but as years have gone by, it is gradually becoming popular among Sri Lankan lay Buddhists.

The government of Sri Lanka is taking steps to recognize these Bhikkhunīs as the properly ordained nuns. Now the Sri Lankan government has issued Identity cards to them giving them the status of Bhikkhunī.[12]

Even though the Bhikkhunī Order is growing popularly in Sri Lanka, other Theravāda Buddhist Countries do not accept it.

My thesis aims at presenting the whole problem of the re-establishment of Bhikkhunī Order in Theravāda Sri Lanka. Examining and analyzing the different views on the matter of the basis of the Theravāda Buddhist tradition, we can also analyze the reasonable claims of the existence of Bhikkhunī Order in China and the little known permission to monks given by the Buddha to ordain Bhikkhunīs reported in *Cullavagga* of *Vinaya Pitaka.*

1.2 Objectives of the Study

1.2.1 To Study the History of the Origin, the Development and Decline of Bhikkhunī Order in Sri Lanka.

[11]Ibid.
[12]Ibid.

1.2.2 To Study how the Bhikkhunī Order got re-established in Sri Lanka, while it seems impossible to get re-established in other Theravāda Countries.

1.2.3. To Study the Present Situation of the Newly established Bhikkhunī Order in Sri Lanka.

1.3 Research Questions

1.3.1. What was the History of the Origin, the Development and the Decline of Bhikkhunī Order in Sri Lanka?

1.3.2. How was the Bhikkhunī Order re-established in Sri Lanka in 1998?

1.3.3. What is the Present Situation of Bhikkhunī Order, which was established in Sri Lanka Six years ago?

1.4 Definitions of the Terms Used in the Thesis

Bhikkhunī Sangha- This is the Pāli term for women who have gained higher ordination and they were one part of four divisions of Buddhist Society. After becoming a Bhikkhunī, they had privileges to act like a monk in the religious activities. Bhikkhunīs are different from *Mae-Chee* in Thailand and Dasa Sil Mātā in Sri Lanka.

Mae-Chee**:** - The woman who observes the eight precepts and lives in a temple in Thailand.

Dasa Sil Mātā**:** -The woman who observes the ten precepts and lives in a temple separated from the monks in Sri Lanka.

1.5 Review of the Literature and Research Works Concerning this Research

There were different kinds of opinions among the two camps, before re-establishment of Nuns' Order in Sri Lanka in 1998. This event was a controversial point in Buddhist History. Some scholars discussed this topic analytically. As a result of these consequences, many books and Newspaper articles had been issued at that time.

The Late Ven. Talalle Dhammāloka has pointed out in his book named "*Mahāpajāpati Gotami and Bhikkhunī-Sāsana in Sri Lanka"* (2000) that the re-establishment of Bhikkhunī Order in Sri Lanka was not

illegal and it was done according to the Vinaya rules. He has mentioned some important facts to prove his views clearly.

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"Women under the *Bo Tree*" is one of the related books with my research and it was written by Bartholomeusz, Tessa j, (1994). It examines the tradition of female world renunciation in Buddhist Sri Lanka. The author has discussed two topics in her book, which are related to my work. Those topics are:- " The Ancient Order of Nuns in Sri Lanka" and " The Sri Lankan Bhikkhunī Sangha; trends and reflections".

In 1994, one of the students in AICITI GAKOIN University in Japan has made a research on this topic before the re-establishment of Bhikkhunī Order in Sri Lanka. It has been most helpful in my research to find out what the situation of Bhikkhunī Order in Sri Lanka at that time was.

D. Amarasiri Weeratatne in his newspaper article on "Revival of the Bhikkhunī Order in Sri Lanka" (1998), has discussed this topic very briefly. A long history has been mentioned in short and sweet. It gives a clear picture about how Bhikkhunī Sangha has come to be again.

Ven, K. Wimalavamsa, wrote another important newspaper article called "Bhikkhunī Sangaha in Sri Lanka" (2003) to the *Yasodharā* Newsletter on international Buddhist women activities. From this article we can understand briefly the History of Bhikkunī Sangha in Sri Lanka and the situation concerning Nuns and their activities, after the re-establishment of it. He has pointed out scholars' opinions on this matter. It is useful information in order to come to proper decision.

1.6 The Method of Research

My research is based on reviewing the literature, interviews and field observations in Sri Lanka. In this research, I hope to pay my attention to discussing the history of Bhikkhunī Order in Sri Lanka and do not plan to discuss the history of Bhikkhunī Order in India. The secondary resources will especially be used as main literary evidence. There will be 8 questions to be asked in the interviews with the selected persons. This work is a qualitative research. The research methodology can be divided into three stages as follows: -

1.6.1 Collecting data from the Pāli text called,

"Disciplines for Nuns" (*Bhikkhunī pātimokkha*), *Bhikkhunī Khandhaka* and their Commentaries, Newspapers Articles, Secondary Resources, Internet and Interviews with selected specific persons both monks and lay people.

1.6.2 Analyzing the collected data critically and categorizing them systematically to give a clear picture of Bhikkhunī Order in Sri Lanka in the past and the present.

1.6.3 Comparing pros and cons of views, which were expressed by selected persons.

1.7 Expected Findings and Advantages of the Study

After doing the research, the following advantages and outcomes can be obtained.

1.7.1 To know the History of the Bhikkhunī Order in Sri Lanka from the beginning up to now.

1.7.2 To know about the Bhikkhunī order that was established in Sri Lanka recently and how it has influenced Sri Lankan society.

1.7.3 To know the present attitude of Buddhists in Sri Lanka towards Women and their Ordinations.

Chapter II

The History of the Order of Bhikkhunīs in Sri Lanka

2.1 Origin of the Order of Bhikkhunīs in Sri Lanka

The historical account of the beginning of the Order of Bhikkhunīs in Sri Lanka began when Arahant Mahinda with another four Therās introduced the teachings of the Buddha to Ceylon (Sri Lanka) in approximately 236 B.E., during the reign of King Devānampiyatissa. Arahant Mahinda preached the Buddha Dhamma to the King and the members of the Royal family, and as a result, the King's nephew Mahā-Arittha, the minister, with fifty-five others had expressed their desire to join the Order of monks. Arahant Mahinda and his colleagues gave ordination (*Pabbajjā*) to them according to the rules laid down by the Buddha.

Meanwhile, as soon as the men had joined the Order, the sub-queen Anulā and her companions had expressed a desire to join the Order as Bhikkhunīs. On behalf of Queen Anulā, King Devānampiyatissa requested Arhant Mahinda to give ordination to these women. Arahant Mahinda refused the request saying that it is not allowed according to the Vinaya rules to give ordination to women who had not been ordained by Bhikkhunīs first[14]. This statement reflects the situation of ordination for the women according to the rules laid down by the Buddha. These will be explained and discussed in details later. Anulā and her companions had to wait for the arrival of Bhikkhunī Sanghamittā from India to get ordination.

Arahant Mahinda was well versed in the Dhamma and Vinaya rules. Before arriving in Sri Lanka, he had studied Dhamma and Vinaya under senior monks in India. We, therefore, can assume that he knew very well the Vinaya rules laid down by the Buddha for ordination for women. The rules laid down by the Buddha for the ordination of women are found in the Pāli Cullavagga of the Vinaya Pitaka. As we face today a situation of many women wanting to become Bhikkhunis, we have to

[14] Mhv. XV, 18-20, p.98

investigate every possibility for the rightful ordination of women according to Vinaya rules.

King Devānampiyatissa sent a massage to Emperor Asoka of India requesting for his assistance to get queen Anulā and other women ordained as Bhikkhunīs. As Emperor Asoka understood the importance of establishing the Bhikkhunī Order in Sri Lanka, he sent his own daughter Bhikkhunī Sanghamittā along with eleven other Bhikkhunīs to Sri Lanka. After arriving in Sri Lanka, Bhikkhunī Sanghamittā and other Bhikkhunīs from India were invited to give ordination to Sri Lankan women. Queen Anulā was the first woman to receive ordination from them.

According to the *Mahāvamsa* records, the great chronicle of Sri Lanka, Queen Anulā who received ordination (*pabbajjā*) from Bhikkhunī Sanghamittā was said to have attained Arahantship'.[15]

The ordination of the Queen and the five hundred women of the Royal court marked the beginning of the order of Bhikkhunīs in Sri Lanka. All of them were said to have attained Arahantship in a short period of time.

2.2 Development of the Order of Bhikkhunīs in Sri Lanka

After the ordination of the Queen Anulā[16] and the women of royal court, the order of the Bhikkhunīs grew and spread throughout the country. As she was a queen the ordination caused much attention among the women in Sri Lankan society. In consequence of this, King Devānampiyatissa and the general population came forward to support the Bhikkhunīs in every way.

After the Bhikkhunī Order was established the *Hatthālhaka* Nunnery or *Upāsikāvihāra* and the *Mahāpāli* refectory were built in the capital City of Anurādhapura and it was richly supported.[17] These supports continued during the reigns of many Kings until the reign of King Moggallāna. During this period of time, the Bhkkhunī Order

[15] Mhv. Cpt. XIX, p. 133, v. 65.
[16] Anulā, the Queen of the king Mahānāga who was the brother of the King Devānampiyatissa.
[17] Mhv. Cpt. XIX, v. 67.

received rich gifts of food, clothing and other requisites.[18] King Mahāsena (277-304 A.D.) who was a supporter of the Mahāyāna monks, built two nunneries called the *Uttarā* and *Abhaya* for Bhikkhunīs[19] and King Moggallāna I (497-515 A.D.) built the nunnery called Rājini and donated it to the Bhikkhunīs who belonged to the *Sāgalika* School. This was one sect of the Bhikkhu Sangha in Sri Lanka during the Anurādhapura period.[20]

According to a Pillar Inscription of the 10th Century, most of the Kings contributed to the development of the Order of Bhikkhunīs in Sri Lanka. The Anurādhapura Slab Inscription made by King Kassapa V, shows that royal officers were not allowed to levy taxes on the nunnery, which was located in the complex of Temples. King Kassapa V granted the immunities from taxation on the lands of the Bhikkhunīs. They were entrusted with the care of the sacred Bodhi tree.[21]

The Royal patronage given to the Order of Bhikkhunīs continued up to about the 10th century as recorded in the chronicles. The Anurādhapura period was the golden era of the Bhikkhunī Order in Sri Lanka. During this period, many Sri Lankan women became Bhikkhunīs and led religious lives similar to the monks' lives.

All Bhikkhunīs who had accompanied Bhikkhunī Sanghamittā from India to Sri Lanka were well educated in the teaching of the Buddha and were very capable of teaching the Buddha Dhamma to the newly ordained Bhikkhunīs in Sri Lanka very well.[22] The knowledge of Sri Lankan Bhikkhunīs on the Buddha Dhamma was very high. The education they had received at the beginning from the Indian Bhikkhunīs who had come along with Bhikkhunī Sanghamittā was kept on a high level during the reign of many kings of Anurādhapura. As recorded in the *Dīpavamsa* chronicle even Bhikkhunīs from the far southern region of the country who were distinguished by their knowledge of the Dhamma came

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[18] Hema Goonatilaka, **The Dasa-Sil Mātā Movement in Sri Lanka**, Sri Lanka Journal of Buddhist Studies-Vol.11, Buddhist and Pāli University of Sri Lanka: 1998. P. 128

[19] Mhv. Cpt. XXXVII, v. 43.

[20] Mhv. Cpt. XXXIX, v. 43.

[21] Hema Goonatilake, op.cit.

[22] " Sanghamittā mahāpaññā uttarā ca vicakkhanā
hema ca masāragalla ca aggimittā mitanvadā
tappā pabbatachinnā ca mallā ca dhammadāsikā
ettaka ta bhikkhuniyā dhutarāgā samāhitā
uttamatthe thitā tattha āgamissanti tā idha" (Dpv: Cpt. XV, vv. 77-79)

to the capital city of Anurādhapura to teach.[23] This shows clearly that the Bhikkhunī order had taken root all over the different regions of the country and was acclaimed for its high education in the Dhamma.

The Spread of the Order of Bhikkhunīs throughout the Island gave Sri Lankan women plentiful opportunities to enter the Order. The Bhikkhunī Order attracted women of the highest social status as well as those in the lower parts of society.

The *Dīpavamsa* chronicle which is older than the *Mahāvamsa* chronicle According to some scholars contains many passages written by Bhikkhunīs for the purpose of recording the religious history and it tells us a lot about the development of the Order of Bhikkhunīs at that time.[24]

The later *Mahāvamsa*, which was written by the very traditional monks of the *Mahāvihāra*, does not give much information on the Bhikkhunī Sangha in Sri Lanka. This may be seen as a reflection of the less prominent role of women in Sri Lankan society at that time.

We can understand with the help of the above mentioned evidence from various sources that the Order of Bhikkhunīs in the Anurādhapura period flourished and developed with the assistance of the rulers and the general population, and that the Bhikkhunīs contributed to the propagation of Buddhism in Sri Lanka while achieving their spiritual goal in a religious life. Their great service in propagating Buddhism was not limited to Sri Lanka. They also greatly contributed to the establishment and the spread of the Order of Bhikkhunīs to other countries.

2.2.1 Sri Lankan Bhikkhunīs in China

Historians believe that Buddhism reached China around the first century C.E.[25] The Chinese historian Pao-Chang gives an account of an early beginning of the Order of Bhikkhunīs in China.[26] These Bhikkhunīs, however, were ordained by monks only. Fully ordained

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[23] Dpv. Cpt. XVIII, v. 20.

[24] Hema Goonatilake, op.cit, p. 130

[25] K. W. Morgan, **The Path of the Buddha** (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1986), pp. 184-85.

[26] Pao-Chang**, Biographies of Buddhist Nuns**, (tr) Li Jung-hi (Osaka: Tohokai, 1981)

Bhikkhunīs did not come to China at that time to perform the ordination. Given the extreme hardships of travel either over the Himalayas or through the deserts of Central Asia, it was difficult even for monks to travel to China to establish the Order of monks there. How much more difficult it must have been for Bhikkhunīs to survive such a journey to establish the Order of Bhikkhunīs there.

In 429 A.D. for the first time eight Bhikkhunīs from Sri Lanka arrived in China, but their number was insufficient to give higher ordination to Chinese women who had already received earlier ordination from monks. However, According to the Vinaya rules ten Bhikkhunīs are required to give ordination to other women. Therefore, another group of eleven Bhikkhunīs headed by Bhikkhunī Devasāra came from Sri Lanka to China in 432 A.D.[27] In the year 433 A.D. for the first time 300 Chinese Sikkhamānās received their higher ordination as Bhikkhunīs according to the Vinaya rules from these ten Sinhalese Bhikkhunīs.[28]

The first Chinese woman who got ordination from the Bhikkhunī Sangha from Sri Lanka was Seng-kuo. In later period, Chinese Bhikkhunīs brought ordination to many countries in Asia, such as Korea, Japan and present day Taiwan.[29]

Having paid attention to one important point concerning the missionary activities of the Bhikkhunī Order of Sri Lanka in China, prominent Buddhist scholar Prof. Hema Goonatilake has stated that:

> There is reason to believe that the Sinhalese nuns who went to China were from the *Abhayagiri* monastery, a center of Mahayanist activities at that time. The first two groups of Sinhalese nuns had arrived in the city of *Nanking*. The Chinese pilgrim Fa-hsien. He had left Sri Lanka, having stayed for two years during the reign of King Mahānāma (410-431 A.D.) and had shown greater interest in describing the activities of the *Abhayagiri* monastery in his records. He also took residence in Nanking where he undertook the translation of Sanskrit Manuscripts specially the Vinaya literature into the Chinese language. It is therefore probable, although not recorded that he

[27] Ibid.

[28] Hemā Goonatilake, op.cit, p. 129.

[29] Edward Conze**, Buddhist Texts Through the Ages** (New Delhi: Munshiran Monoharlal Publishers Pvt. LTD., 1995). pp. 291-293.

took the initiative in bringing the missions of Sinhalese nuns to China. The Sinhalese nuns traveled from Sri Lanka to china in a Chinese merchant ship. Fa-hsien, in his records, mentioned that the Chinese merchants he had seen made offerings to *Abhayagiri* Monastery. Another fact that supports the close connection between the *Abhayagiri* monastery and China is that King Mahānāma (in Chinese records called 'Mo-ho-non') sent a letter to the Chinese emperor along with a model of the shrine of the Tooth Relic in 428 A.D. The shrine of the Tooth Relic was under the care of the *Abhayagiri* monastery, at that time.

It may, therefore, be assumed that Sri Lankan Bhikkhunīs who traveled to China were from the *Abhayagiri* monastery. Although the establishment of the Order of Bhikkhunīs in China by Sinhalese Bhikkhunīs was a significant event in the history of Buddhism, it is strangely not mentioned in Sri Lankan chronicles or other Sri Lankan Sources. It comes to us only from Chinese sources. This point to the possibility that the Bhikkhunīs who went to China were of the *Abhayagiri* monastery. We may assume that the traditional monks of the *Mahāvihāra* did not mention this important event, when compiling the Sinhala chronicle *Mahāvamsa.* They represented the Theravāda tradition and were probably not interested in reporting on Mahāyāna activities of *Abhayagiri* Bhikkhunīs.

However, during the time the Bhikkhunī Order existed in Sri Lanka it proved to be an asset to the religion and rendered great service to the Sāsana.

2.3 Decline of the Order of Bhikkhunīs in Sri Lanka.

The Order of Bhikkhunīs flourished from the beginning in Anurādhapura to its end (400 B.C. – 1031 A.D.). As recorded in the *Mahāvamsa* chronicle, King Mahinda IV (1015-1031 A.D), who ruled during the end of Anurādhapura period, had built a nunnery for the Bhikkhunis[30]. By this, it is very clear that there were ordained Bhikkhunīs at that time. But after that time there have been no records about the Order of Bhikkhunīs in Sri Lanka. It seemed to have disappeared completely.

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[30] Mhv, Cpt. VIV, p. 57

Some scholars have given different reasons for the disappearance of the Order of Bhikkhunīs from Sri Lanka in the 11th century. Most of them have accepted that the fall of the Anurādhapura Kingdom to the Cholian invaders in 1017 A.D. and the annexation of the Anurādhapura Kingdom to the Cholian Empire were the main reason for the disappearance of the Order of Bhikkhunīs.[31]

The Order of monks also met the same fate. This period of Sri Lankan history is marked by continuous warfare between the reigning kings, their rival claimants, and the foreign invaders. Such a political situation evidently did not give the rulers the time, resources and opportunities to support the religion and its institutions, and as a result, the Sangha community and the monasteries were neglected

Punchibandāra Sannasgala, a contemporary writer on Buddhists affairs, has mentioned other reasons for the decline of the Order of Bhikkhunīs in Sri Lanka such as; a lack of Bhikkhunīs who were well-educated in *Dhamma* and *Vinaya*, the division of the Bhikkhu Sangha into various groups, the strong foreign influence dominating the country and the instability of the Kingdom.[32] All these reduced the support from the rulers and ordinary people in the society to the Sangha.

Another very important reason as pointed out by the Bhikkhunī Vajirā is "A result of the influence of two different sects of monks causing the appearance of similar different sects among the Bhikkhunīs may have caused the order of Bhikkhunīs to decay and disapper".[33] She further says that "before sectarianism started, all Bhikkhunīs belonged to the sect of the Great monastery in the time of King Valagambā. Two sects appeared within the Order of Bhikkhunīs because of the influence of the two sects of Monks". It was a tradition that Bhikkhus gave guidance and advice to Bhikkhunīs. At the beginning of the Sangha in Sri Lanka there was not difficulty with this as there were a lot of monks well qualified to do this. A general decline of the Sangha, which was divided in different sects, caused similar divisions in the Bhikkhunī Sangha as well.

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[31] D. Amarasiri Weeraratne, op.cit, (4th April 1998). P. 8.

[32] Punchibandāra Sannasgala, **Sinhala Sāhitya Vamsaya** (in Sinhala, Colombo, The Government Press: 1994), pp. 34-35.

[33] P. Vajirā Silmātāva, **Bhikshunī Vamsaya** (in Sinhala, Anurādhapura, Gunesēkara Pvt. LTD: 1992), Cpt. XIIIV, pp. 365-369.

In a later period many problems arose in society. All parts of the country were affected and declined materially and spiritually. These affected the Order of Bhikkhunīs very strongly and caused its disappearance from Sri Lanka. Less support from the people is another reason for the disappearance of the Order of Bhikkhunīs. The attitude of People in general and their support are more important for Bhikkhunīs than for Bhikkhus as they depend much more on the support of the Buddhist lay people in the society. In addition other reasons can be found for the disappearance of the Order of Bhikkhunīs, such as:

1) Difficult disciplinary code
2) Nunneries were mostly located inside the city which made them vulnerable to destruction at times of war or political conflict
3) The observance of special rules
4) The physical weakness and fragility of women
5) The decline of Buddhism in general

It is said that during the time of Mahā Vijayabāhu, the Great Sinhalese King, (1065-1125 A.D.) at the beginning of 11th century, the Order of Bhikkhunīs had disappeared from Sri Lanka completely.[34]

[34] M. P. Sriyanti, **Bhārata Lanka Bhikshunī Sāsana Vamsaya** (in Sinhala, Nugegoda Dipāni Press, Colombo: 1986) p. 50.

Chapter III

Re-establishment of the Bhikkhunī Order in Sri Lanka

3.1 Situation before Re-establishment of the Bhikkhunī Order in Sri Lanka

From its establishment, Buddhism spread throughout the Island with the full patronage of the Royalty. When the country was in political crisis, Buddhism too was faced with the same problems. This situation can be seen in the history of Sri Lanka from the Anurādhapura period to Kandy period.

3.1.1 Situation of the Sangha during the Polonnaruwa Period to Kandy Period (1055 A.D – 1815 A.D)

In his book '*History of the Buddhist Sangha in India and Sri Lanka'* Mr. Gunaratne Pānabokke has written about the situation of the Sangha in the Polonnaruwa period. He has noted that:-

> By the end of the tenth century, the tension which had earlier existed between the three fraternities *(Jetavana, Abhayagiri, Mahāvihāra*) had greatly eased. We find them now working closer together since all monks were now faced with common threats such as the loss of temporaries due to foreign invasions. Most affected was the Abhayagiri monastery, which had lost all contacts with the Sangha outside Sri Lanka. Moreover the very traditional Mahāvihāra itself absorbed religious ideas foreign to Theravāda Buddhism. These situation and enabled all the monks of the three Vihārās to work in close co-operation since their traditional differences during the foreign occupation had undergone changes and had become less important. Owing to the political disturbances in the latter part of the ninth century, the monastic Order in Sri Lanka declined and monks in the Island migrated to India and to other countries in Southeast Asia. When peace was again established by King Vijayabāhu I, they

returned to Sri Lanka and once again established the former traditions of monastic life.[35]

The Foremost of King Vijayabāhu's act for the cause of Buddhism was the rehabilitation of the monastic order. When he ascended the throne, there were not sufficient monks with higher ordination in the Island to form a quorum for the performance of the basic ecclesiastical rites such as admission to the Order. This, according to the Vinaya, needed at least five fully ordained monks. The Chronicles and the stone inscription of Vijayabāhu state that to re-establish admission to the Order and perform higher ordination in the Island, the monarch had to bring monks from Aramana in Burma (1059-1114 A.D).[36]

Under King Parākramabāhu's rule, Buddhism and the Sangha once again enjoyed another period of prosperity. Apart from the material assistance to the temple and the clergy, one of the most outstanding events that occurred during his rule was the purification of the Sangha and the reconciliation of the monks of the three fraternities.

The glory of Buddhism and prestige of the Sangha which had reached a high level during the reign of King Parākramabāhu I once again fell into ruin and destruction, owing mainly to the recurrent warfare within the country and the devastating foreign invasions.[37]

In the period of constant political strife, the Sangha undoubtedly was faced with severe difficulties. Those who survived the various calamities did so under very trying circumstances. This even prompted monks to take up various occupations incompatible with their monastic rules. The loss of temporalities, lack of state patronage and the unsettled economic state of the Island drove the Sangha into this sad plight.[38]

To revive the glory of Buddhism, King Vijayabāhu III (1232-1236 A.D) caused many books of the Tripitaka to be re-written, as most of these works had been destroyed by the Māgha invaders. Admission to the Order and the conferring of higher ordination, which had long been

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[35] Gunaratne Pānabokke, **History of the Buddhist Sangha in India and Sri Lanka**: The Postgraduate Institute of Pāli and Buddhist Studies, University of Kelaniya, 1993), p.136

[36] Ibid.

[37] Ibid., p.172

[38] Ibid., p.175

neglected, was reestablished and the monarch extended his full patronage towards reviving this.[39]

During the Kandyan period (1473-1815 A.D) Buddhism in Sri Lanka was in the decline owing to several reasons such as: unsettled political situation of the country, the break up of the hierarchical system, the monks' neglect of the study of the Dhamma and Vinaya, the practice of joining the Sangha purely for personal benefits with a view to enjoy monastic wealth, and the monks' active participation in mundane activities thereby ignoring the lofty ideals of monkshood. These were some of the salient features which hastened the decline in monastic life and practice.

The reintroduction of higher ordination from Thailand was the most outstanding event in monastic history of this period. Apart from the new lease of life it gave to the Sangha, it once again marked the re-establishment and the continuation of the orthodox Theravāda tradition which had been continued uninterrupted in the Island till the time of political disturbances. From the time of Arahant Mahinda the monks in Sri Lanka had been very eager to protect this tradition. Earlier we noticed that during the reign of King Vijayabāhu, when the tradition was in danger, monks from Burma were brought to Sri Lanka to ensure continuation of Theravāda tradition. This time, the monks from Thailand came to Sri Lanka to ensure the continuation of Theravāda tradition.[40]

Thus the monastic Order established by the King Mahinda continued uninterrupted in Sri Lanka and retained most of its traditional features. Though it was weakened on various occasions it was revived when monks were brought from Burma and Thailand where the Mahāvihāra tradition had been established earlier.[41] Buddhism developed when the political situation in the country was stable. Royal patronage is one of main facts for the surviving of the Buddhist Order. This relationship between King and Sangha got lost to the nation in 1815 A.D. when the last Sinhalese King was dethroned by the British invaders.

Under the British rule, the monasteries lacked official status and were unable to defend their rights on lands owned by the temple. One

[39] Ibid.
[40] Ibid. p.216
[41] Ibid. p.229

report claims that 800,000 acres of temple property were confiscated. The Buddhists became second-class citizens, while those converted to Christianity rose up to the best positions in the colonial administration. Only Christian Sundays and other Christian festival as well as British national holidays were celebrated in this Buddhist country. There were various anti-colonialist uprisings and prominent Buddhist monks participating in it were condemned to death. Threats like these to the religious, national and cultural traditions of Sri Lanka caused a movement of Buddhist revival in Ceylon. These movements by the traditional elites led to the revival of Buddhism in Sri Lanka.

A movement to revive Buddhism in Ceylon began in the later half of the nineteenth century through the efforts of a learned monk named Gunānanda. His eloquent lectures on Buddhism aroused much interest. These lectures attracted the attention of Colonel Henry Steel Olcott, an American Civil War officer, who came to know of the conditions of Buddhism in Ceylon. In 1880, he came to Ceylon to help in the revival of Buddhism. He traveled around the country encouraging the people to revive Buddhism, reorganized the Buddhist educational system in modern principles and founded the Theosophical Society of Ceylon. He also created the Buddhist flag, which is now used in all Buddhist countries including Thailand. One young Sinhalese who came under his influence was David Hewāvitārane, who later became a great Buddhist leader called Anagārika Dharmapāla, the founder of the Mahā Bodhi Society (1891 A.D.) and the Buddhists revival movement in India. Both of them traveled widely, giving lectures on Buddhism, distributing Buddhist literature and collecting funds for Buddhist education. Their active missionary work created widespread support for Buddhism in Sri Lanka. By the mid of the twentieth Century, Buddhism was once again as strong as it had ever been on the Island.

3.2 Origin and Development of Dasa-Sil-Mātā (DSM) Movement

Dasa-Sil-Mātās, the women who observed the ten precepts and used to wear yellow robes living as a religious order, were recognized to be one of the forces which developed as a result of Buddhist resurgence in the later part of the 19th Century when Sri Lanka was still under the British rule. The effort displayed by Anagārika Dharmapāla who was the

pioneer of the Buddhist revival in Sri Lanka had brought about an awakening among the women to devote themselves to religious lives.

By this time, a young Christian-born Sri Lankan affluent woman had embraced Buddhism, went to Burma and became a DSM by the name of Sudharmācāri. She returned to Sri Lanka in 1905 and formed the Sudharmadhāra Samiti (which is the name of a foundation) in the city of Kandy in Sri Lanka, to promote the movement of DSMs.

The governor Sir Henry Blake, Sir D.B Jayatilaka, Anagārika Dharmapāla and other Buddhist leaders supported her. They built a nunnery for her at Katukelle, Kandy in 1907. This marked the beginning of the Dasa-Sil-Māta movement in Sri Lanka. Women from many parts of the Island came to her for ordination. She ordained, trained them and sent them to outstations. Thus from 1905 onwards these DSM nuns were the legacy and the representatives of the Bhikkhuni Sangha of old.

Prof. Mrs. Hema Gunatileka, the outstanding Buddhist scholar and Editor of the Buddhist times says: "The interest in the DSM movement among the educated middle classes has waned over the years. This leads us to explore the social character of the general membership and the reasons that motivated them to enter the religious path. Among the rural as well as the conservative urban classes, the religious atmosphere at home helped develop a deep liking among girls from a very young age to renounce lay life".[42]

In the beginning, the DSM movement was supported by the Government of Sri Lanka and the educated middle class, but the interests in the DSM movement faded out after some time.

A new awakening occurred in 1983 when the Department of Buddhist Affairs in the Ministry of Cultural Affairs initiated a program of action for the promotion of the DSM. A program was launched to provide educational facilities to monastic institutions and to DSM to prepare for Prācheena Examinations on Buddhist studies and oriental languages, a facility that was available only to Sāmaneras and Bhikkhus up to that time. By 1995, 15 monastic institutions, which hitherto conducted classes only for Bhikkhus, began to run classes for DSMs. Identity cards were

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[42] Hema Goonatilake, "The Dasa-Sil-Māta Movement in Sri Lanka", **Sri Lanka Journal of Buddhist Studies**, Vol. 11, (1988): Pp 131-132.

issued to DSM as a first step of recognition. A national federation of DSM was formed with representatives elected from the DSMs organizations at the district level. The executive committee of the Federation met together monthly in Colombo to discuss and decide upon the program of activities.

In 1985, a delegation of Buddhist scholars was sent to China by the Ministry of Cultural Affairs to explore the possibility of restoring the Bhikkhunī Order in Sri Lanka. The report of the delegation was never released, although one member of the delegation mentioned in an article that an unbroken Bhikkhunī lineage continued to exist in China.

Although the effort made by the Ministry of Cultural Affairs to restore the Bhikkhunī Order yielded no official result, the interest generated continued to gather considerable momentum. The debate and discussion in the mass media continued as before to surface after another couple of years. The issue now progressed into a continuing public discourse. Newspapers, both in Sinhalese and English languages gave coverage to the arguments for and against the restoration of the Bhikkhunī Order. A weekly Sinhala newspaper on Buddhism ran a series of articles for twelve months in the years 1988-1989 on the controversy between the senior Bhikkhu and a strong male advocate for the restoration. For the first time, a documentary was made in 1986 by the State Television Corporation on the DSM movement, its history and the contemporary situation, with interviews from advocates as well as from opponents. The film won the award for the best documentary of the year.

The DSMs were now in the process of gaining self-confidence and self-esteem owing to the State patronage lent to them even on a small scale. In addition, the strong resentment of the Sangha hierarchy to the restoration of the Order of Bhikkhunīs had encouraged some of the younger Bhikkhunīs to better equip themselves with more education and greater disciplinary strength. The fact of marginalization itself had apparently given them a spirit of confidence that could build up to challenge the opposition of the Order of Bhikkhus in time to come. Up to this time, there were only a few educated young Bhikkhunīs who had the couragement to write to the local newspapers advocating the restoration of the Bhikkhunī Order constituted only a few. During the last decade, many younger Bhikkhunīs have been voicing strong sentiments in the mass media in support of restoration of the Bhikkhunī Order.

A new trend that took place during this time was that local women's organizations were taking the issue of the restoration of the Bhikkhunī order as a woman's rights issue. *Kāntā Handa* (Voice of Women), one of the first women's organizations in Sri Lanka took the initiative to invite DSM to discuss the issue at several seminars at the national and district level. This did draw the attention of national women's organizations to the issue.

Another sign of hope was that a critical mass of scholars, both lay and Bhikkhus from universities and monastic institutions has been building alliances with DSMs advocating restoration. Articles by these scholars began to appear regularly in daily and weekend newspapers and magazines.

An annual magazines devoted to the issue of the restoration of the Bhikkhunī Order called *Meheni Udāwa* (Dawn of the Bhikkhunis) initiated in 1990 by Bhikkhunī Ambala Rohana Gnānaseela, had been able to harness the support of many Buddhist Bhikkhus and lay men and women. A monthly version of this magazine called *Siri Lak Meheni Udāwa* (Dawn of the Bhikkhunīs in Sri Lanka) published by Janopakāra Buddhist Society, Kandy had also attracted a great deal of attention to the subject. The Society widely disseminated published booklets in Sinhalese and English in support of the issue.

The publication of articles advocating the revival of the Bhikkhunī Order in mainstream Buddhist magazines, both in Sinhalese and English had also become a regular feature by that time. To cite an example, the annual Buddhist publication of the Sri Lanka Government Printing Department called *Nivan Maga* (Way to Nirvana) devoted its 1994 publication to women's liberation, adorned with picture of serene DSM entering a shrine room with a bowl of flowers. This issue contains contributions from Bhikkhus and DSM and lay Buddhist advocating the revival of the Bhikkhunī Order from different perspectives.

By this time, several American and European women, ordained in Theravada tradition, were also active in the campaign for the revival of the Bhikkhunī Order. The writings by these women brought the issue to the international arena. Special mention should be made of the contribution made by the German born Sister Khema and the Sākyadhitā International Women's Organization initiated by her in 1987 in Bodh Gayā, India. One of the stated objectives of the Sākyadhitā International

women's Organization was, "To assist women who wish to obtain ordination and work toward establishing full ordination for Buddhist women in the countries where it is not currently available". Sister Khema who frequently visited and stayed in Sri Lanka from time to time, provided considerable support and encouragement to the DSM in Sri Lanka.

Another factor has been that many Sri Lankan Bhikkhus running Buddhist Centers and temples in the West had increasingly become open minded towards the issue. Ven. Dodandūwe Piyaratana Thera of the Los Angeles Buddhist Vihāra was one of the first Bhikkhus to conduct Samaneri Ordination as early as 1987. In addition, educated Sri Lankan Bhikkhus who traveled frequently outside the country have been exposed to the question of the rationale for excluding women from the Buddha's order.

3.2.1 Activities of DSMs before the reestablishment of the Bhikkhunī Order

The activities of DSMs cover religious, social and spiritual aspects. In the way of social work, their activities are wide and varied. Activities include conducting Dhamma classes for children, chanting *pirit*- (protecting runes) for pregnant mothers for easy delivery, nursing the sick in the neighborhood, and organizing and helping societies for social work for the poor. One of the most useful social functions performed by DSM to women is the informal advisory service given on occasions when the women run to the village Ārāma after being maltreated by their husbands, physically and verbally. Meditation is considered a vital component in the daily routine of a DSM. There is someone who lived in seclusion and has developed high achievement in meditation.[43]

DSMs who were known throughout the Country were engaged in works of service with minimum facilities in the Ārāmas (Temples) where they were living. These works included building small temples in rural areas, opening Buddhist Sunday Schools for children, preaching the Dhamma to the people. Before reestablishing the Order of Bhikkhunīs in 1998, there were more than two thousands DSMs who were doing social

[43] Ibid.

service in fifteen districts of Sri Lanka. They faced many difficulties when they lived as DSMs.

The survey of DSMs that was conducted by the Department of Buddhist Affairs in the Ministry of Cultural Affairs sometime ago had responses from 1175 DSMs all over the country. DSMs shaved their hair and wore robes with a long sleeved blouse, all of light yellow color. They live a life of celibacy in a Ārāma. The dwelling place of one or more DSMs may be called a Ārāma. A DSM usually has a few possessions- a bed, a table, a chair, a begging bowl, a few changes of clothing, and a pair of sandals and books, which were offered by Buddhist people. The people of the area cooked their meals. They are well known for their simple and frugal ways of living.[44]

There were a few training centers for DSMs where they receive training in Dhamma, Vinaya, Abhidhamma and meditation. There are also special women's sections in the meditation centers common to both men and women where DSM and lay women follow courses in meditation.

A very few DSMs lived in jungle Ārāmas or in caves. Two such DSM, a mother and daughter has reached a very high level of attainment in meditation, although they had little education. They generally survive on tree leaves, jungle vegetables and fruits.

There were some DSMs who are either too old or too sick to work or live alone. They often live in a part of a house belonging to a daughter or a relative. There were some others who are neither old nor sick but live in a room in a daughter's house, since they have not been able to find a convenient Ārāma to stay in.[45]

Prominent Buddhist scholar Prof. Hema Goonetilake points out some reactions from monks to the Issue of the DSMs movement. She had made personal interviews with the leading senior monks.

Many had some complaints to make by saying that DSMs bring disgrace to the country they beg and they are not educated. Some strongly protested against them that they should not be allowed to claim the status

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[44] Ibid.
[45] Ibid.

as Bhikkhunīs, should not wear yellow and patch work robes and should not accept Sanghika Dāna (alms dedicated to the Sangha) which is not believed to confer more merit on the givers. The majority of these monks ridiculed the DSMs and was against them. A few monks, however, strongly argue for restoration of the order of Bhikkhunīs.

Many Buddhist leaders among the Clergy and laity realized that DSM status was not incompatible with the Buddha's concept of a four-fold division among his disciples and devotees. The Buddha recognized only Bhikkhus, Bhikkhunīs, male lay devotees and female lay devotees (*Bhikkhu, Bhikkhunnī, Upāsaka, Upāsikā*). There is no room for the status of the DSM between lay women and Bhikkhunīs. They felt that the status of the DSMs keeps down women from their proper place as Bhikkhunīs. This argument backed up Buddhist scholars advocating to discussion about the re-establishment of the Order of Bhikkhunīs in the Theravāda tradition.

3.2.2 Revivalist Pioneers

The first person in modern times to advocate the revival of the defunct Order of Bhikkhunīs was the Late. Anagārika Dharmapāla. He opened a nunnery at Colombo with two Europeans and five Sri Lankan DSMs. Two years after he had gone to India, this nunnery was unfortunately closed down.

In 1952 Ven. Nārāwela Dhammaratana of the Vidyālankāra University led a peace delegation to Peking, China. After the conference he took time to study the Bhikkhunī Order in China, focusing on its history and validity in terms of the Vinaya rules. He found out that Sinhalese Bhikkhunīs from Anurādhapura established the Bhikkhunī Order in China according to the Theravāda Vinaya tradition in 429 A.D. He suggested that it was eminently suitable to revive the Order of Bhikkhunīs in Sri Lanka by getting Chinese Bhikkhunīs to ordain a group of DSMs from Sri Lanka. After returning to Sri Lanka he organized a center for training DSMs Nuns for Bhikkhunī Ordination. His untimely death disrupted his program of work.

Within Sri Lanka itself by this time, many Bhikkhus became increasingly sympathetic to the issue. Several scholarly Bhikkhus have, for a long time, been in favor of the restoration. It was only the leading

Bhikkhus in the hierarchy of the Sangha that harbored strong sentiments against it.

Internationally well known Sri Lankan Scholars like Dr. G.P Malalasekera, Ven. Henpitagedera Gñānaseeha, Ven. Walpola Rāhula, Ven. Balangoda Ānanda Maitreya, Ven. Māpalagama Vipulasāra Ven. Ināmaluve Sumangala and Ven. Pandit Talalle Dhammāloka pursued the issue.

A serious effort to restore the Bhikkhunī Order was made in 1996 by the Sri Lankan Bhikkhu, Ven. Dr. Dodamgoda Revata Thera, the Bhārata Sangha Nāyaka (Sri Lankan Sangha Nāyaka of India) with the support from a few leading Bhikkhus in Sri Lanka headed by Ven. Māpalagama Vipulasāra Thera. This was done to meet a genuine need for missionary activities in India. After being trained for three months by a team of Korean Bhikkhunīs, ten Sri Lankan DSMs were given higher ordination by the Korean Bhikkhunīs in December 1996 at Sārānāth, India, which is the very place where the Buddha started the Bhikkhunī ordination. The ordination of the Sri Lankan Bhikkhunīs was confirmed by a team of Korean and Sri Lankan Bhikkhus.

In 1996, more meaningful initiatives in the direction of the restoration of the Bhikkhunī Order took place in Sri Lanka. An influential Sri Lankan Bhikkhu, Ven. Ināmaluwe Sumangala Thera, the abbot of a 2,200-year old monastery in Dambulla in the central province of Sri Lanka had established a Bhikkhunī Educational Academy to provide training for selected DSM with the objective of conducting a higher ordination ceremony in Sri Lanka. Although many of the DSM had received higher formal education and were well educated in the Dhamma and Vinaya, it was important that they were trained in the practice of the 311 precepts. Trainees were selected after a written and an oral examination. By the time the Bhikkhunī Educational Academy in Sri Lanka had competed the training of three teams of DSM, an international higher ordination ceremony was being organized by the Buddha's Light International Association of Fo Guan Shan, Taiwan in February, 1998 at Bodh Gayā, India. Ven. Sumangala Thera took the opportunity, and arranged for twenty of his trainees to participate in the higher ordination ceremony at Bodh Gayā in India.

The objective of the higher ordination ceremony at Bodh Gayā, as stated in fliers and banners was "in gratitude for having received the

Bhikkhunī lineage from Indian and Sri Lankan Bhikkhunīs missionaries and the Chinese felt that it was their duty to return the lost Bhikkhunī lineage to the ancestral lands. The Fo Guan Shan, therefore, accepted the invitation to sponsor a higher ordination, at the most sacred place Bodh Gayā in India. This was to allow Bhikkhunīs living in countries such as India, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bhutan, Thailand and Western countries to have the opportunity to take higher ordination as Bhikkhunīs.

A total number of 149 Buddhists (14 Bhikkhus and 135 Bhikkhunīs) who received higher ordination on that occasion came from Asian countries such as India, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Taiwan, Korea, Japan, Malaysia, Singapore, Hong Kong and Vietnam and from western countries such as England, Germany, Italy, Spain, Belgium, US, Canada, and Australia. They received higher ordination in accordance with the Dharmagupta School, an early branch of the Theravāda, which had continued with an unbroken lineage of Bhikkhunī ordination according to the Theravāda Vinaya rules in China and Taiwan. The Sri Lankan Bhikkhunīs took ordination from both Bhikkhus and Bhikkhunīs who belonged to the Thearavāda and Mahāyāna lineage.

Twenty-four Bhikkhu preceptors and witnesses which included Bhikkhus of Theravāda tradition from India, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Cambodia and Nepal, and Bhikkhus of Mahāyāna tradition from Taiwan, Hong Kong and Malaysia officiated. Twelve Bhikkhunī preceptors and witnesses came from Taiwan, Korea and the United States (ordained in the Tibetan tradition) to give higher ordination. Sri Lankan Bhikkhus served as preceptors of the Sri Lankan Bhikkhunīs. Every sentence spoken in Chinese language at the ceremony was translated into English, Hindi and Sinhalese. All Theravāda Bhikkhunīs were dressed in their traditional yellow robe, while the Mahāyāna Bhikkhunīs were attired in their own style of robe.

3.3 Views for and against the Re-establishment of the Order of Bhikkhunīs in Sri Lanka.

In Sri Lanka the restoration of the Bhikkhunī Order became a serious subject of debate and discussion only about seventy years ago. Arguments for and against have been put forward by Sri Lankan Bhikkhus as well as by the laity. There have been two different opinions.

The conservatives stuck to their traditional objections and the progressives called for a revision of the traditional stand and for a restoration of the Order of Bhikkhunīs.

Here the researcher would like to review the main arguments:

The main argument against the restoration of the Bhikhunī Order is the widespread opinion that the lineage of the order has been broken, and until such time the Buddha Maitreya is born, there is no possibility to establish the Bhikkhunī Order. The Bhikkhunī Order if established now will not be valid because according to the Theravāda tradition women should be first ordained by the Bhikkhunīs and then by the Bhikkhus. Since the Theravāda Bhikkhunī Order does not exist in Theravāda Buddhist countries any more, but it exists only in Mahāyāna countries, it is therefore argued that it would be the Mahāyāna tradition, and not the Theravāda tradition. It should be pointed out here that the only Theravāda country where the Bhikkhunī Order ever existed was Sri Lanka where the Bhikkhunī Order was established, only six months after the establishment of the Order. The Bhikkhunī Order was never established in other Theravāda countries such as Thailand, Burma, Cambodia and Laos.

However, the Ven. Pandit Nārāwala Dhammaratana Thero, one of the advocates for the revival of the Bhikkhunī Order while leading a peace delegation to a conference in Peking, China, took the opportunity to study the Bhikkhunī Order in China and found that Sinhalese Bhikkhunīs from Anurādhapura had established it there in accordance with the Thearavāda Vinaya rules in AD 429.[46]

Owing to the improved relations and the closer contact with China, Korea, and Taiwan, in recent years, it became known that the Bhikkhunī Order brought to China by Sinhalese Bhikkhunīs continued in these countries in an unbroken succession. Recently, after extensive research by a group of women from Sri Lanka and Europe, it was confirmed that the Bhikkhunī lineage in Taiwan and Korea is actually of Sri Lankan origin

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[46] Amarasiri Weeraratne, D, "Revival of the Bhikkhunī Order in Sri Lanka", **The Island Newspaper**, 4 April 1998, Retrieved 18 November 2003, <http://www.buddhanet.net>

Therefore it is possible to reintroduce the Order of Bhikkhunīs to Sri Lanka from one of these countries, either by bringing a group of Bhikkhunīs to Sri Lanka or by sending a group of applicants to those countries to be ordained. Sending applicants to one of these countries is a better approach, since they would have the opportunity to undergo training under the fully ordained Bhikkhunīs there. This would mean that the Bhikkhunī Order that was earlier sent from Sri Lanka to China could be received back.

It may also be mentioned here that Sri Lanka received back higher ordination for Bhikkhus on two occasions from the countries where the higher ordination had been introduced earlier by Sri Lankan monks. When the order of Bhikkhus became extinct in Sri Lanka after the Chola invasion in the 11th century, it was from Burma that King Vijayabāhu brought Bhikkhus to re-establish the Bhikkhu Order in Sri Lanka. There was no mention of the re-establishment of the Bhikkhunī Order at that time.

Again in 1753, at a time when there were only Sāmanerās observing ten precepts in Sri Lanka, it was at the invitation of the King Kirti Sri Rājasingha, that a delegation of Bhikkhus from Siam (Thailand) came to Sri Lanka to confer higher ordination to Sri Lankan Sāmanerās. Applying the same rule, the Bhikkhunī Order which still exists in China, can be utilized to bring back the Bhikkhunī Order to Sri Lanka.

The Ven. Nārāwala Dhammaratana, Principle of Vidyālankāra University, pointed out that the ordination of Bhikkhunīs should first be done by Bhikkhunīs and thereafter by Bhikkhus and said it would be suitable to overcome existing obstacles concerning this Vinaya rule by turning to the Mahāyāna tradition and perform Bhikkhunī Ordination by Mahāyāna Bhikkhunīs.[47] Considerable numbers of laymen and laywomen also favor such a step and support this cause.

A great supporter of the Bhikkhunī Ordination, the Late Ven. Mahānāyaka Ānandamaitreya, used the argument that "women wanting to be ordained as Bhikkhunīs do not look for a fancy life but wants to be ordained to live a life of virtue and we should give it to them".[48]

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[47] Ibid.

[48] Bhikkhunī Charlotte Suddhamma, " A radiance of Nuns," Retrieved 20 July 2004, <http://www.dharma.org/ij/archives/2003a/radiance.htm.

Prof. G.P. Malalasekara, founder of the World Fellowship of Buddhists (WFB) presented three possibilities when he called for the restoration of the Order of Bhikkhunīs.[49]

First, according to the *Mahāparinibbāna Sutta* in *Dīgha Nikāya*, the Buddha, when lying on his death bed, is said to have told his attendant Ven. Ānanda that the Sangha was permitted to abolish lesser and minor rules. Malalasēkara says "That is the first possibility- a decision by a representative assembly of the Sangha to dispense with the traditional ceremonial in the ordination of nuns. Making use of the Buddha's final concession, it is within the power of the Bhikkhu Sangha to make the necessary amendments to restore the Bhikkhunī Sangha by performing an ordination without the participation of nuns. If any monk believes that the rules pertaining to the ordination of nuns are of major concern and do not fall within the category of "lesser and minor rules" he would be invited to come forth and justify his position.

Secondly it is possible to make use of an injunction issued by the Buddha that stipulates, "I permit you, monks, to confer full ordination on nuns." There are references in the texts that show that some regulations were amended, altered or abrogated by the Buddha Himself on various occasions under special circumstances. The absence of Bhikkhunīs in Theravāda clearly being a special circumstance, these textual references should be sufficient for granting monks the authority to ordain nuns with a clear conscience that no transgression of the Vinaya rules has been committed. Those who oppose the restoration of the Bhikkhunī Sangha on the grounds of Vinaya technicalities seem to ignore this relevant injunction.

Thirdly, certain special procedures have been performed in Buddhist history, such as when Mahāpajāpati Gotami and her companions took the precepts before the Bhikkhunī Sangha had been instituted. The ordination of Buddhist monks, nuns essentially consists of followers taking upon themselves voluntarily the observance of certain precepts. Ordination is not something that is transmitted from one person to another, rather, it is the certain precepts that one undertakes to keep

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[49] Thich Nu Lien Hieu, "Restoring the Order of Nuns to the Tradition" "Buddhism Today," 2002, Retrieved 20 July 2004, < http://www.saigon.com/~anson/edbha184.htm.

and observe in accordance with one's own motivation. The Buddhist ordination is essentially different from the ordination of priests found in other religions, where priests are regarded as intercessors between human beings and a diving power. In the Buddhist context, there is not relegation of authority, no question of acting anyone on earth acting as a divine ministrant. Just as Buddhist lay people in Sri Lanka undertake to observe the eight precepts on *Poya* days (Buddhist day) by reciting the precepts at a shrine, there is nothing to prevent women from observing the precepts for novice or full ordination. There can not be any serious objection to this type of self-ordination.

If any of the above suggestions by Prof. Malalasekara is accepted, it would be possible to restore the Bhikkhunī Sangha within the Theravāda tradition. What is required is an understanding of the spirit, rather than the letter, of the Vinaya regulations. There are two further options available for the restoration the Bhikkhunī Sangha which has come to light because of the public discussions and the debates that took place on this issue in Sri Lanka, particularly in the past fifteen years.[50]

First, if the Venerable Mahānāyakas, the leading Bhikkhus of the Theravāda tradition in Sri Lanka, are not prepared to accept the authenticity of the Bhikkhunī Sangha in China and other Mahāyāna countries, Sri Lankan Buddhist women are still free to seek ordination in any Buddhist tradition they like. Nuns fully ordained in other traditions should be recognized as Bhikkhunī without any discrimination. The leaders of Theravāda Sangha in Sri Lanka should not be hasty to oppose such a move. The choice to renounce worldly life and practice of "the holy life" is the undeniable right of all Buddhist women. No Buddhist can legitimately deny women this right. Those who oppose women's right to obtain ordination within the Theravāda tradition cannot oppose their right to become Bhikkhunīs in another tradition.

Mr. Gunapāla Dharmasiri, a famous writer on this issue has stated that, "since the tradition of Vinaya ordination is fundamentally the same in Mahāyāna and Theravāda, if an ordination lineage has been lost in one tradition, it can be reinstated by borrowing from those countries

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[50] Ven. Sanghamittā and the Order of Nuns, **Daham Amā Mahinda Commemorative Volume** (in Sinhalese Version) (Colombo: Department of Buddhist Cultural Affairs, 1993), pp. 21-26.

where it has been preserved".[51] The respected scholar Ānanda Wellawatta Thera holds a similar view[52] saying that to question the validity of an ordination given by another established Buddhist tradition is not reasonable or justified.

Secondly, a meeting to confer Bhikkhunī ordination could be held by a special body comprising the leading members of the international Sangha community, representing several Buddhist traditions from all over the world. Sri Lankan candidates could be Sāmaneri or full Bhikkhunī ordained by this representative's body. At present there are several international Buddhist organizations, including one recently established in Colombo.[53] The convening of an international body of monks and nuns would therefore not be a difficult task. The DSMs of Sri Lanka have dedicated their lives to the Buddhist path as nuns in an age when few are willing to promote the welfare of Buddhism as a whole. As Prof. Jotiya Dhirasekara has stated, "Buddhism has contributed much to the emancipation of women".[54] This contribution has been impaired by the opposition of Theravāda leaders in Sri Lanka to the revival of the Bhikkhunī Sangha.

The late Dr. Senarat Paranavitāna has asserted that without the Bhikkhunī Sangha, the present-day Bhikkhu Sangha in Sri Lanka can not be called a Mahāsangha (great order). In addition, the inability of the Theravāda tradition to meet the legitimate demands of women to practise Buddhism equally makes it vulnerable to criticism.

Many heads of the Nikāyās (monastic orders) in Sri Lanka opposed to give ordination to women maintain that it can not be granted within the Theravāda tradition of Vinaya. According to the Theravāda Vinaya tradition a woman should be ordained by Bhikkhunīs and then by the Bhikkhus. Before the method of giving Bhikkhunī ordination by Bhikkhunīs and Bhikkhus was laid down, the Buddha had permitted monks to ordain women without the need of having received ordination from Bhikkhunīs earlier. After having received ordination from the

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[51] "Buddhist Monks in the 20th Century", **Vimutti Symposium of the Rāmañña Sect Annual Ordination Ceremony** (Kalutara, Sri Lanka; 1991), pp. 18-24.

[52] Ananda Wellawatte, "The Life of the Mahayana Bhikkhunī, " **Prajnāsāra Felicitation Volume** (in Sinhala), pp. 250-57.

[53] Thich Nu Lien Hieu, Op.cit.,

[54] Jotiya Dhirasekera, **Buddhist Monastic Discipline**, (Colombo: Ministry of Higher Education Research Publication Series. 1982), p.141.

Buddha, Mahāpajāpati Gotami, the first woman who became Bhikkhunī asked the Buddha what rules should be followed for the ordination of the women, her company. The Buddha did not reply this question, but spoke to her about the Dhamma for sometime until Mahāpajāpati Gotami had respectfully taken leaves of the Buddha.

After that The Buddha directed the monks saying "*Anujānāmi bhikkhave bhikkhūhi bhikkhuniyo upasampādetunti*" (I permit you monks, to confer full ordination on nuns). From this occasion onward women received ordination from monks only.[55] As time went on, many women from different areas entered the order of Bhikkhunīs. As it was found that some women suffered from certain diseases, the Buddha ruled that they be questioned before ordination as was also necessary before the ordination of monks.

At the ordination ceremony, the woman has to answer twenty-four questions. There are sixteen disqualification questions, which are divided into eleven questions concerning the gynecological deformities and five with diseases. The questions about the five diseases, leprosy, boils, eczema, consumption, epilepsy, are the same for women and men.

This guidance given by the Buddha could, however, not be followed as women wishing to be ordained. They were shy to answer such questions asked by monks. It was therefore often unclear to the Bhikkhu Sangha whether they were free from these obstacles or not, and under these circumstance the ordination procedure could not be continued. After hearing that, the Buddha imposed the rules that special eleven questions put to the aspirant nun should not be asked by Bhikkhus but only by Bhikkhunīs. These led to the rule that the need for women to be ordained by Bhikkhunīs first and thereafter by Monks became necessary. The Theravāda tradition for the ordination of women was developed in this way. This tradition has been followed from that time onward up to the point when the Bhikkhunī Sangha was sought to be defunct.[56]

This is the Theravāda tradition pointed out by monks who are opposed to the establishment of the Order of Bhikkhunīs in Sri Lanka.

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[55] I.B. Horner, tr., **The Book of the Discipline**, (Cullavagga), (Pāli Text Society: Oxford, 1992) vol. V, p.357.

[56]Translation committee, tr., **Cullavagga** Pāli (in Sinhala Verstion) part 2, Buddha Jayanti Tripitaka Grantamāla (BJE), (Colombo: Janarajaya, 3977), p. 472

Other arguments were brought forward by the late Ven. Madihe Paññāsīha, the President of Sri Lanka Amarapura Mahā Sangha Sabā (2002). He said "It is clear that there is no room whatsoever for establishing Bhikkhunī Order in accordance with the Theravāda Vinaya rules." Further, he said, "Although there are Buddhist nuns in Mahāyāna countries, the High Priests of all the five Theravāda countries do not recognize them as being correctly ordained in accordance with Theravāda Vinaya."[57]

The late Ven. Palipāna Chandānanda, the Mahānāyaka of Asgiriya Chapter of Siyām Nikāya said (2002), "Bhikkhunī Devasārā who went to China in 429 A.D and established the Bhikkhunī Order was one of Bhikkhunīs belonging to the Abhayagiri Sect which was following the Mahāyāna tradition. According to the Venerable's idea, it is impossible to accept that the Chinese Bhikkhunī Order depends on Theravāda tradition. Therefore presently reestablished Bhikkhunī Order in Sri Lanka does not represent the Theravāda tradition."[58]

The leading Bhikkhus of the Sangha in Sri Lanka as well as many monks in Sri Lanka do not accept the assertion that the lineage of the Bhikkhunī order continued unbroken in China and could be reintroduced. According to the seminar organized by Sri Lankan monks at Maharagama Siri Vajirañāna Dharmāyatanaya in July 23, 1988 it is impossible to reestablish the order of Bhikkhunīs by taking assistance from China.

They argued that when three Sri Lankan Monks visited China at the invitation by the Ven. Thai Shu, a senior Chinese monk, in 1946, they saw that most of the nuns were devotees of Buddhism but they were ignorant of Dhamma and Vinaya and it became clear that Buddhism in China was not pure and developed. Bringing the Order of Bhikkhunīs from China could not be accepted by Sri Lankan High priests and many monks.

This was answered by the Monks who advocated the re-establishment of the Order of Bhikkhunīs saying that before the decline of Buddhism in China many Bhikkhunīs went to Taiwan and

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[57] Waligama Ñānaratana Thero, **Bhikkhunī Order and Bhikkhunī Discipline** (In Sinhalese Version), (Nugegoda: Timira Publication, 2002), Pp. 111-118.

[58] Ibid. pp. 107-110.

Korea and the Order of Bhikkhunīs has existed there up to now. It is, therefore, possible to get assistance from those countries without hesitation.

The Ven. Ajahn Brahmavaŭso pointed out that "if it turns out that the ordination procedure used by the Mahāyāna Bhikkhunīs contains the vital ingredient of a formal resolution, put three times to a gathering of at least 5 Bhikkhunīs, informing those gathering that the candidate wishes for ordination as a Bhikkhunī and asking their approval, then the ordination is probably valid according to the Theravāda standards.[59]

3.4 Women Ordination Ceremony in India

Though many were against giving DSMs the 'Bhikkhunīs' status, two renowned Buddhist monks came forward to help them. The Ven. Māpalagama Vipulasāra, Principle of the Parama Dhamma Cetiya Pirivena, a well recognized Buddhist institute for monks and the President of the Mahābodhi Society with the assistance of the World Sangha Council and Sākyadhitā International Organization of Buddhist Women held an ordination ceremony in December 8, 1996 at Sārānāth Temple, India.[5]

At this ceremony 10 selected Sinhalese DSM were fully ordained as Bhikkhunīs by a team of Theravāda monks and a group of Korean Nuns. Thus for the first time after 980 odd years, the Theravāda Order of Bhikkhunīs was reestablished in India.

February 15, 1998 marked the ceremony which took place at Bodh Gayā in which for the very first time ever in history that the Buddhists representing diverse traditions and schools from around the world joined together for a truly international ordination. This was especially significant, because it was a joint effort by Buddhist leaders to re-establish the order of nuns in Sri Lanka, Thailand, Tibet, and India, where no women had been ordained as Bhikkhunīs for more than eight centuries.

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[59] Ajahn Brahmavamso, **Vinaya Ordination of Women,** Buddhasāsana Homepage January-March 1990, Retrieved 15 July 2004, < http://www.saigon.com/~anson/ebud/ebsut036.htm.

[5] Hasi Lai, **A New Dawn for Women's Rights**, February 1998, Retrieved 24 August 2004, <http://www.english.hsilai.org/english2/newdawn.htm>.

For nine days, 140 novices from 23 countries (including India, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Taiwan, Japan, Korea, the Congo, Germany, Belgium, France, Italy, Denmark, Spain, Canada and the United States) congregated near a descendant of the Bodhi Tree under which Siddhartha Gautama is said to have attained enlightenment.

The text of the Vinaya rules pertaining to ordination ceremony (Buddhist monastic precepts) was provided in five languages: Chinese, English, French, Nepalese, and Sinhalese. The Mahāyāna renunciation ceremony, organized by the Ven. Master Hsing Yun and the Fo Guang Shan Buddhist Order, underlined the cooperative efforts and the support of Buddhist leaders, including Dalai Lama.[6]

The legitimacy of ordaining the women as Bhikkhunīs has become a major topic of debate within the Buddhist community. The rules of discipline for Buddhist monks and nuns stipulate that the ordination of women to become Bhikkhunīs requires the presence of both ordained Bhikkhus and Bhikkhunis. Complintly, the ordination ceremony in Bodhgayā was officiated by Buddhist monks from around the world and by Bhikkhunīs from Taiwan.

The idea of bringing together Bhikkhus and Bhikkhunīs from different Buddhist traditions and schools to solve the ordination problem gradually took shape during a series of annual international monastic seminars. At the conclusion of the fourth such conference, held in May, 1997, the participants requested the Ven Master Hsing Yun, founder of the Fo Guang Shan Buddhist Order, to organize a renunciation ceremony to reintroduce a Bhikkhunī lineage in those countries currently lacking one. Fo Guang Shan was asked to spearhead this effort because it has branch temples worldwide.

The women from India, Sri Lanka, and Thailand who received ordination in Bodh Gaya on February 1998, could not expect a warm welcome from all their Buddhist brethren when returning to their respective countries, as the more conservative members of the Southeast Asian monastic communities were not willing to recognize the authenticity of their ordination.

3.5 Re-establishment of the Bhikkhunī Order in Sri Lanka

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[6] Ibid.

3.5.1 Date and Place

For the first time since the disappearance, the Bhikkhunī Order was restored at Sārānāth, India on December 8, 1996 with the help of Korean Nuns. The ten Sinhalese nuns who received their Bhikkhunī Ordination from them did not return to Sri Lanka as a group, some of them remained in India while a very few of them came to Sri Lanka to visit only and others disrobed. The Bhikkhunī Order therefore was not reestablished in Sri Lanka. Another Ordination ceremony was held at Bodh Gayā on the 20th of February, 1998, which was organized by Taiwanese Nuns who had come to India for that purpose. Sinhalese DSMs who received ordination from them came back to Sri Lanka where they ordained 22 selected Sinhalese DSM into the Bhikkhunī Sangha on the full moon day of March 12, 1998 at the *Uposathagāraya* at the Dambulla Temple in the central province of Sri Lanka.[7]

3.5.2 Participants

Bhikkhunī Panāgoda Ñānassari and Bhikkhunī Rahatungoda Saddha Sumanā acted as preceptors and another Selected Eight Bhikkhunīs as *Karmācaryas* in the ordination ceremony at the Dambulla Temple. This ordination was made complete as required in the Vinaya rules by 10 Sri Lankan Bhikkhus under the direction of the Ven. Ināmaluwe Sumangala Thero.

3.5.3 The legitimacy and the continuity of the Chinese Higher Ordination

The Bhikkhunī Order has continued to exist up to the present times in China with an unbroken *Upasampadā* lineage. According to the Chinese Bi Chu ni Chang (Biography of Nuns) compiled in 520 A.D. two batches of Sinhalese nuns headed by Tie-so-ra (Devasārā) went to China in 429 A.D and gave higher Ordination at the Southern Forest monastery in Nanjing to more than 300 Chinese nuns.[8]

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[7] Hema Goonatilake, "A Silent Revolution: The Restoration of the Bhikkhunī Order in Sri Lanka", Proceedings of the 8th International Conference on Sri Lankan Studies, Jaifur, 2001, p.8.

[8] Pi-chiu-ni-chuan, **"Translation of Biographies of Buddhist Bhikkhunīs"** (in Sinhala), Lake House, Colombo, 1994. also see, Karma Lekshe Tsomo (ed) "Bhikkhunis of

The majority of Han nationals of China observe today the Dharmagupta Vinaya tradition, while in the region where the Tibetan system of Buddhism is present the Mūla-Sarvāstivāda Vinaya is followed. It is to be noted here that both the Mūla-Sarvāstivāda and the Dharmagupata schools are like the Theravāda schools of the early Buddhism in India which strictly observed the Vinaya rules as found in the Pāli Tipitaka.

The Dharmagupta School which was branched off along with the Sarvāstivāda is known to have flourished in China. It has been established that the Vinaya and the Suttas in Sarvāstivāda and Dharmagupta schools in essence are the same as in the Theravāda. It is the later developed Abhidhamma that is different in these schools. All Vinaya rules as found in the *Dharmagupta Bhikkhunī Pātimokkha* are precisely the same in content as those in the *Theravāda Bhikkhunī Pātimokkha*. The only difference is that the order in which the rules appear varies, and there are many more rules in the Dharmagupta tradition than in the Theravāda.[9]

Dharmagupta tradition contains 25 more rules than in the Theravāda *Vinaya*. These extra rules relate to the use of fully covered shoes when entering into shrines, etc. This indicates that these minor rules arose from adjusting to the social and climate needs of China. It can be concluded that the *Dharmagupta Bhikkhunī Vinaya* rules as they were applied in China today are the same as the Theravāda *Bhikkhunī Vinaya* rules.[10]

At this point Mrs. Prof. Hema Goonatilake has pointed out:- "On a visit to China in 1984, as part of a study of Buddhist nuns in Asia, I found that, in spite of political turmoil in China, some Chinese nuns had continued the practice under very difficult circumstance at a time when many disrobed. Some nuns fled to Taiwan and continued as nuns. Today, the nuns Order flourishes both in Taiwan and in Korea (transmitted through China) where nuns outnumber the monks".[11]

China", Sakyadhita: **Daughters of the Buddha**, (Snow Lion Publications, Ithaca, New York: 1989).

[9] Bhikkhunī Kusuma, **Bhikkhunī Vinaya** (Colombo: Ratmalana Visvaleka Publication, 2003), p. xxvi.

[10] Hema Goonatilake, op.cit, p.5.

[11] Ibid, p.4.

In 1998, when the reestablishing Bhikkhunī Order in Sri Lanka, Taiwan Bhikkhunīs had given Ordination to Sinhelese DSMs which was considered in keeping with the Therāvāda tradition exist Taiwanese belong to Darmaguptta school. Although China, Taiwan, Korea, Japan are considered as Mahāyāna countries, Bhikkhunīs in those countries are following the Theravāda Vinaya rules.

3.5.4 Outcome of the Bhikkhunī Ordination Ceremony in Sri Lanka in 1998

For the first time since the disappearance in the Anurādhapura period the Bhikkhunī Order in Sri Lanka was reestablished according to the full Theravāda ceremonial. Sinhalese DSMs, Buddhist women devotees and many advocating for the re-establishment of the Bhikkhunī Order were satisfied that in Sri Lanka the Bhikkhunī Order was reestablished. Again Sri Lanka became the Theravāda country with the Bhikkhunī Sangha. Other Theravāda countries such as Thailand, Burma, Laos, and Cambodia have never had a Bhikkhunī Order.

The event of the first ordination ceremony was highly publicized with a one-page supplement in a national newspaper. News of the event was carried in almost all of the national newspapers including the state owned ones. The newspapers carried impressive pictures of Bhikkhunīs walking in single file with their begging bowls and yellow robes.

The Ven. Sumangala Thera in an interview recorded immediately after the event for that evening's news over the State Television Corporation, emphasized the fact that in restoring the Bhikkhunī Order after over 900 years of its disappearance in Sri Lanka said it merely followed the injunctions laid down by the Buddha. Immediately after that, Prof. Mrs. Hema Goonatilaka was interviewed for the same news coverage, and she pointed out that the reestablishment of the Bhikkhunī Order brought about full recognition of Buddhist women leading a life of Bhikkhunīs.[12]

To every one's surprise, there were no negative reactions from the hierarchy of the Bhikkhu Sangha. One reason for that may have been because the Ven. Sumangala Thera himself is a high-ranking Bhikkhu in the Sangha of Sri Lanka. Monks in Siyām Nikāya who were most vocal

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[12] Ibid, p. 8.

on the issue of the reestablishment of Bhikkhunī Order also kept silent. Several months later, when Prof. Hema Goonatilaka interviewed the Ven. Sumangala Thera to find out the reasons for the absence of negative reactions, he suggested that the very influential monks of Siyām Nikāya may have kept silent for fear of losing some of educated middle class devotees who are supporters of the restoration of the Bhikkhunī order. However, few months later the late Ven. Gangodavila Soma, well known monks of the Maharagama Bhikkhu Training Center said, ‘ Bhikkhunīs have a place only in Mahāyāna Buddhism practiced in Korea, Japan and countries of East Asia. “Those who are encouraging the revival of the Bhikkhunī Order are selling out Theravāda Buddhism to the Mahayanists. According to him, their main motive in reviving the order was to solicit financial support from the more affluent Mahayanist practitioners at the cost of diluting Theravāda tradition. These arguments did not go unnoticed and create doubt in the mind of the Buddhists in Sri Lanka.

Several strategies adopted by the Ven. Sumangala Thera to promote the recognition of Bhikkhunīs from the very beginning of the training program at the Bhikkhunī Educational Academy are noteworthy. The supporters of DSMs were directed to contribute to the program by providing food to all trainees. In spite of this strategy, the lay devotees from all over the country came to identify them with the training program as well as with the final outcome of the program, which is the restoration of the Bhikkhunī ordination.

Another strategy which the Ven. Sumangala thera employed was to organize reception ceremonies for the Bhikkhunīs returning to their communities after receiving higher ordination. The reception committees were made up of senior Bhikkhus in the district, the members of Parliament and other dignitaries and media representatives. The ceremonies were presided over by the chief Bhikkhu of the respective area. The idea was to gain acceptance of the Bhikkhunīs from the Bhikkhus of the respective areas.

At the opening ceremony of the newly constructed building complex of the Dambulla Temple he addressed those present as Bhikkhus, Bhikkhunīs, Upāsakās and the Upāsikas. The head of monks of the Asgiriya chapter of the Siyām Nikāya, the representative of Malwatta chapter of Siyām Nikāya and many other leading monks present at the ceremony did not object addressing the ordained ladies as Bhikkhunīs. For the Sānghika Dāna offered on that occasion, five hundred Bhikkhus

and fifty Bhikkhunīs walked on position to take seats in the new building. In his speech the Ven. Sumangala said that the re-introduction of Bhikkhunī Order would strengthen Buddhist religious activities for serving the People in Sri Lanka.[13]

3.6 Views for and against the reestablishment of Bhikkhunī Order in Sri Lanka after six years.

From 1998 to 2004 A.D. the reestablished Bhikkhunī Order in Sri Lanka expanded, being supported by many lay Buddhists and few monks. However, Most of the Bhikkhus in Sri Lanka do not come forward to support Bhikkhunīs Sangha because the head monks of three Nikāyas of the country do not accept the Bhikkhunī Order claiming that it was not done in according to the Vinaya rules. However the population of Bhikkhunīs was increasing day by day. The lay Buddhists supported the reestablished Bhikkhunī Sangaha. It was a very progressive situation which could not be stopped easily. The new Bhikkhunīs in Sri Lankan society are contributing much to the development of Buddhism in the country. The main problem faced by the Bhikkhunīs is that they are not accepted by the head Bhikkhus of the three Nikāyas. I interviewed two of them to know their opinions and reasons for not accepting the reestablished Bhikkhunī Order in 1998.

The Mahānāyakas, the head of monks of three Nikāyas, viewed the revival with disfavor. The objections raised by them were based on the traditional view that the revival of the Bhikkhunī Sangha was not in accordance with the Vinaya rules laid down for the ordination of Bhikkhunīs. The Ven. Udugama Buddharakkhita, Mahānāyaka of Asgiriya chapter of Siyām Nikāya insisted that "Theravāda Bhikkhunīs" have to give ordination to ladies which had to be followed by ordination given by Bhikkhus.[14]

Prof. Ven. Devālegama Medānanda,[15] Head the department of Pāli and Buddhist Studies at the Kelaniya University and the Ven.

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[13] Ibid, p. 9.

[14] Interview with Ven. Udugama Buddharakkhita, Mahānāyaka of Asgiriya Chapter, March 08, 2005.

[15] Interview with Ven. Devālegama Medhānanda, Head the Department of Pāli and Buddhist Studies of Kelaniya University, March 16, 2005.

Māduluvāwe Sobhita,[16] incumbent of the Kotte Sri Nāgavihāra said that:- "there are no obstacles in the Vinaya rules for the reestablishing of the Bhikkhunī Order because without Bhikkhunīs monks can give ordination and higher ordination to women by themselves. Both monks, however, don't accept the Bhikkhunīs who got ordination in 1998. The reason is that the Bhikkhunī Order was reestablished by a few monks without the approval of the majority of the Sangha especially the Sangha leaders of three sects.

The idea of these two monks as they told me is as follows:- The Bhikkhunī Order could be reestablished according to the Vinaya rules without involving any ordination by Mahāyāna Bhikkhunīs. They hold the views that there is no need to seek assistance from the Mahāyāna tradition. According to Both monks, the Therevāda Bhikkhunī Order could be reestablished by the decision of the Sangha based on the Buddha's decision who had given permission to monks to ordain women who had not been ordained by Bhikkhunīs first. This is very clearly stated in the *Cullavagga Pāli* in *Vinaya Pitaka*. A decision by the Sangha to that effect should be brought about.

In replying to the above two monks, the Ven. Sumangala said,[17] "I followed a Vinaya text, which says, "I permit you, monks to confer ordination on women". This Vinaya injunction has not been revoked or annulled. I found in this text the authority to revive the Bhikkhunī Order at present time. But to avoid controversy with traditional insistence on the dual ordination, I decided to revive the Bhikkhunī Order with the assistance of Mahāyāna Bhikkhunīs".

Prof. Ven. Warakāve Dhammāloka of the Peradeniya University said:-[18] 'The opinion of the Mahānāyakas is not based on acceptable facts. They are repeating the traditional views without searching for historical evidences.' The Ven. W. Dhammāloka also hold the view that the Bhikkhunī Order can be established again according to the Vinaya rules, but he doesn't accept the reestablishment of the Bhikkhunī Order as

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[16] Interview with Ven. Maduluwāwe Sobhita, Incumbent of the Kotte Sri Nāgavihāra, March 08, 2005.

[17] Interview with Ven. Ināmaluwe Sumangala, Chief incumbent of Rangiri Dumbulla Uyanwatta Rajamaha Vihāra ans the Presedent of Sri Lanka Bhikkhunī Organization, March 19, 2005.

[18] Interview with Ven. Warakawe Dhammāloka, Professor of Peradeniya University and Register of Asgiriya Sangha Sabhā, March 08, 2005.

done in 1998 saying that it was not done by getting approval of the Sangha authorities in Sri Lanka.

According to the views held by Prof. Ven. D. Medānanda, Ven. M. Sobhita, Prof. Ven. W. Dhammāloka and Prof. Tilak Kāriyawasam[19] (Buddhist studies in Kelaniya University) the reestablishment of the Bhikkhunī Order is a necessary movement within Sri Lankan society and it can be established by monks according to the Vinaya rules. Taking support from the Mahāyāna Bhikkhunīs is not a problem because the Mahāyāna ordination system can be changed according to our custom and traditions and to the needs of the hour.

All of them emphasized that the Ven. I. Sumangala has acted arbitrarily. It is a very important thing to get approval from the Sangha leaders in Sri Lanka before doing any important religious activities which affected Buddhist tradition in the country. On the contrary, when the Bhikkhunī Order was reestablished in 1998, the organizers were advised by three Mahānāyakas to prevent from this reestablishment. Organizers of the ordination ceremony did not pay attention to this advice. Now the three Mahānāyakas of Sangha in Sri Lanka are not willing to change their attitude concerning the reestablished Bhikkhunī Order of the year 1998.

Besides the three Mahānāyakas, I interviewed other senior monks and professors of Buddhist studies about their views on the reestablishment of the Bhikkhunī Order. They all said that the Bhikkhunī Order should correctly be reestablished and should be developed. They pointed out that one of the main characteristics of present time is the increased activity by women, which has overtaken men in every field. They said ‘this is the era of women’. In the religious context women are also willing to work harder than men. More women than men support all religions in the world. In Sri Lanka the religious devotees are slowly moving away from the Bhikkhu Sangha. Religious faith is very important in developing any religion. We can improve religious faith held by the people if we have the Bhikkhunī Sangha. Bhikkhunīs are also better suited than Bhikkhus to remedy many problems in the present society. All the interviewed persons see great importance in the reestablishment of the Bhikkhunī Order in Sri Lanka.

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[19] Interview with Tilak Kāriyawasam, Professor of Kelaniya University in Buddhist Studies, March 16, 2005.

Before reestablishing the Bhikkhunī Order there are many things to be done as categorized below:

First, Counting DSMs and grouping them according to their age, education, knowledge etc. Second, opening education centers for them. Third, outstanding monks should be selected to guide the DSMs in their activities and education. Fourth, the DSMs should come under the supervision of the three Nikāyas of the Sangha in Sri Lanka. Fifth, DSMs should be trained for six or seven years after which with the approval of the three Nikāyas of the Sangha and the government of Sri Lanka, the Bhikkhunī Order could be reestablished. This is what Ven. Prof. D. Medānanda suggested to which Ven. M. Sobhita fully agreed.

In the interviews I asked for the personal views from the Bhikkhus and professors on the reestablishment of the Bhikkhunī Order in 1998 and its present situation.

Two Mahānāyakas do not pay any attention to this new movement and ignore the activities of Bhikkhunīs throughout the Island. However, the Mahānāyakas are informed of the situation of the new Bhikkhunīs by newspapers, articles or report of some individuals. They don't know the details of what is happening in rural areas and how Bhikkhunīs are working to be accepted by the Sri Lankan Buddhist Society. At the beginning, after the reestablishment, a lot of attention was given to the Bhikkhunīs, but some time afterwards it disappeared. Most of the monks and lay people do not see any great change in the Buddhist society of Sri Lanka after the Bhikkhunī order was reestablished. These are the views given by the Ven. M. Sobhita and the Ven. Prof. D. Medānanda who don't accept the Bhikkhunī Order in 1998.

Not only senior monks but also DSMs do not accept the newly established Bhikkhuni Order. D. Hemapāli Silamātā, Secretary of the DSMs congress for Kurunegala District said, "the Bhikkhunī Order reestablished in 1998 could not be accepted because no Theravāda Bhikkhunīs gave the first ordination and the Mahānāyakas as well as the Government of Sri Lanka did not give their approval." The Bhikkhunī Order reestablished in 1998 was therefore a private matter for those concerned. Most of DSMs in Sri Lanka do not even know about the reestablished Bhikkhunī Order.

A common view is that there is no difference between those Bhikkhunīs and the DSMs. For overcoming suffering, it is not necessary to become a Bhikkhunī. Many of the DSMs say they live like Sāmaneries. If we live a life of virtue, the observing of the Bhikkhunī Vinaya rules is all what is needed. She further said that, 'The aim of DSMs who received higher ordination in 1998 did this to get a good status in the society. They are the lives of virtue which was not improved on an account of it. There are about 2000 DSMs in the country who do not want to enter the Order of Bhikkhunīs.

Inviting the Mahāyāna monks and Mahāyāna Bhikkhunīs to reestablish the Bhikkhunī Order was also criticized by most of the monks including the three Mahānāyakas in Sri Lanka. They do not see Mahayāna representing the original Buddha Dhamma. Although the Buddha did not allow sectarianism to lead to disunity in the Sangha, on several occasions one hundred years after the Buddha's passing away, sectarianism entered the Sangha. This brought sections of the Sangha to hold different views of the Dhamma which led to the development of different schools. The Theravāda hierarchy in Sri Lanka says it is their tradition not to invite Mahāyāna monks or nuns to assist their ordination ceremonies. "Mahāyāna tradition is not accepted in Sri Lanka" said Sobhita thera. Prof. Tilak Kāriyawasam on the other hand, said, 'taking support from the Mahāyāna tradition is not a problem, but the Vinaya rules have to be observed. If the two groups of monks decide on the Vinaya rules, it causes no problem. That should be correct'.

Expressing ideas on this point Mr. D.A. Weeraratne said, 'the Vinaya does not recognize or endorse sectarianism. If monks and nuns observe the Vinaya rules and accept the basic Dhamma, i.e. the Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold path and other teachings, they are genuine the Buddhist monks and nuns. Such monk and nuns can teach, practice and propagate Buddhism in the modern world. Sectarian prejudices based on traditional practices in the past should not hamper the spread and progress of Buddhism in the modern world."

The Mahānāyakas have failed to take any actions against the monks who supported the reestablishment of the Bhikkhunī Order and to the newly ordained Bhikkhunīs who are doing some religious activities, which in the past were done by monks only? The Ven. U. Buddharakkhita said, 'religious law is now under the state law. We can't take any action against them. A Powerful Sangha Act is needed in Sri Lanka to

handle such affairs. In this case the Ven. M. Sobhita accused the Mahānāyakas of weak administration of the Sangha. The Ven. Sobhita said:- 'the present situation of the Sangha in Sri Lanka is sorrowful. There is no one to supervise Sangha community effectively and to make decision on problems concerning the Sangha. Some monks are acting as they like. The three Mahānāyakas have failed in their responsibilities of supervising the Sangha'.

When I interviewed the Ven. Ināmaluwe Sumangala, president of Sri Lanka Bhikkhunī organization, and the Ven. Batagama Medhānanda,[20] incumbent of Nawgala Monastery who have both contributed to the reestablishment of the Bhikkhunī Order in Sri Lanka, they came forward to say they support the reestablishment of Bhikkhunī Order owing to several reasons requested by the DSMs and the invitation of international organizations. Furthermore Mrs. Ranjani de Silva who is the president of the Sākyadhita women organization, asked him to give support to the reestablishment of the Bhikkhunī Order.

The Ven. Ināmaluwe Sumangala said he came forward to reestablish the Bhikkhunī Order for the following reasons. 1. To stop especially the women from looking for help from other religions. 2. To release poor rural Buddhists from the demanding influence from some monks who have power to control them. 3. To uplift the status of Buddhist women in Sri Lankan society. 4. To give a good position to the DSMs within the Sangha community.

He claimed to have followed a proper way to reestablish the Bhikkhunī Order. He says he asked the three Mahānāyakas and Ministry for Buddhist affairs for support and help for the reestablishment of the Bhikkhunī Order in 1998. However the Mahānāyakas and the government did not pay any attention to his request. The Ven. I. Sumangala then decided to go ahead with the reestablishing of the Bhikkhunī Sangha according to the Theravāda Vinaya rules in the absence of any reaction to his request made to the Mahānāyakas and the government. He further said that, permission for this from the Mahānāyakas and the government was not needed as the Dhamma and Vinaya rules alone were important in this decision.

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[20] Interview with Ven. Batagama Medhānanda, Chief incumbent of Nawgala Monastery, April 3, 2005.

According to the Ven. I. Sumangala there are some rules in the Vinaya Pitaka laid down by the Buddha. Later on, when the Buddha found that it was necessary to add some more rules to the previous rules, they were added accordingly. The original Vinaya rules continued to be in force. The rules allowing monks to give higher ordination to women as a part of the Vinaya Pitaka. The Buddha never canceled this rule. And we can use the rules laid down by the Buddha to reestablish the Bhikkhunī Order. The Ven Sumangala therefore says that the higher ordination to women can be given by the Bhikkhus without the assistance of the Bhikkhunīs. In 1998 when the Bhikkhunī Order was reestablished assistance from the Mahāyāna Bhikkhunīs was used said the Ven Sumangala to please the people who are of the opinion that dual ordination is necessary.

Traditionally the Siyām Nikāya of the Bhikkhu Sangha in Sri Lanka will ordain only men of a certain high caste. The Ven. Sumangala who was ordained in the Siyām Nikāya challenged this practice by giving ordination to Buddhist laymen not belonging to that higher caste. He says leading monks of Siyām Nikāya have carried out this caste policy for a long period in order to protect their power and the profits in the monasteries.

Many monks of the Siyām Nikāya criticized the Ven. Sumangala for reestablishing the Bhikkhunī Order and thereby allowing women of all castes to become fully ordained Bhikkhunīs. He represents the new force in the Sangaha by doing away with discrimination based on the caste system and the discrimination of the female gender.

Prof. Tilak Kāriyawasam observed that the Mahānāyaks and other senior monks opposed the Bhikkhunī Order because they feared that the support they receive form the lay people will get divided. According to the Ven. Sumangala Thera the reasons for being against to Bhikkhunīs by Mahānāyakas can be noted briefly as follows:-

1. They haven't studied deeply the *Vinaya Pitaka* especially *Bhikkhunī Khandhaka.*

2. Considering the *Mahāvaüsa* (the great chronicle of the Sinhalese people) as *Vinaya* text and the arguing depends on this book. According to this point, the Veneralble Mahinda refused to give ordination to Queen Anulā saying that it is necessary to wait for the

arrival of his sister the Bhikkhunī Sanghamittā to confer the first ordination.

3. Clinging to traditional views.

4. Fear of loosing privileges from the society.

Some DSMs say they do not need to become Bhikkhunīs as they can participate in all religious activities except funeral ceremonies and *Sāngika Dāna*. Ruwanpura Dhammadinnā Silamātā, Dhammarucikārāmaya of the Kuliyāpitiya area said, ‘we do every religious activity like monks except two of the above mentioned once, and most of the DSMs do not like to become Bhikkhunīs.’

Chapter IV

The Present Status of the Bhikkhunī Order in Sri Lanka

Sri Lankan Buddhist Lay people and some senior monks have supported the development of the Order of Bhikkhunīs from the very beginning up to now. At present there are four hundred *'Upasampadā* Bhikkhunīs' in Sri Lanka and 3000-4000 DSMs live in the 1000-1500 Bhikkhunīs Ārāmayas scattered throughout the country. To find out what the present situation of the Bhikkhunīs is, I visited Sri Lanka for field studies. I had opportunities to meet and converse with many Bhikkhunīs during my visit. All information in this chapter is based on my own experience and the interviews I have made with the key persons concerned.

4.1 The Lifestyle of the Bhikkhunīs

Sri Lankan monks are fully supported by the Buddhist lay People. Twice daily people bring foods for the monks in the temple. The tradition of collecting foods by going with alms bowl as practiced in other Theravāda countries is generally not done. The Bhikhunīs also don't go to collect food. Lay devotees offer food to the Bhikkhunīs at the temple. Generally, families living around the nunnery have organized the way of offering food in a systematic manner.

I was told by Bhikkhunīs that lay devotees unable to come to offer food to the Bhikkhunīs donate money or groceries for the Bhikkhunīs to prepare the food by themselves. This is the way lay devotees also support the Bhikkhus when unable to offer prepared food to them. Some Bhikkhunīs told me they go to collect alms only when they are specially invited to do so. On such occasions they go in a group to collect alms. A Bhikkhunī does not go alone for that purpose.

Some Bhikkhunīs told me they would like to go with their alms bowls to collect foods everyday, but they do not do so to avoid disharmony with the Bhikkhus who do not go out to collect food.

The building for nunneries which came up after the reestablishment of the Bhikkhunī Order was constructed by donations from the lay people eager to collect merit in that way.

Although Some Bhikkhunīs are working as teachers in Government schools and get salary, their main supports are given by the lay devotees. Many of the Bhikkunīs told me that the support they receive form the lay devotees enough for them to carry on their lives and duties as Bhikkhunīs.

Bhikkhunīs told me they wake up at 4.30 am and go to bed at 10.00 p.m. and during that time they do many religious activities in the nunnery some times together with lay devotees and sometime alone. After breakfast the novice Bhikkhunīs had to do their studies under the supervision of the senior Bhikkhunīs until lunch time. The Bhikkhunīs do their worshiping and chanting three times a day. Most of the activities of the Bhikkhunīs are similar to activities in the temple where the monks are living.

4.2 The Population of the Bhikkhunīs

From 1998 up to now the population of the Bhikkhunīs has grown up gradually. When the Bhikkhunī Order was reestablished in Sri Lanka in 1998 there were 42 Bhikkhunīs in the country. At the end of year 1998 the number of the Bhikkhunīs increased into 93. In the year thereafter many more DSMs took ordination. Further more, fifteen DSMs went to Taiwan where they received Bhikkhunī Ordination in 1999 and after returning to Sri Lanka were known as the Nawgala Bhikkhunīs which is the name of their temple. From that time onwards the Bhikkhunīs in Sri Lanka have been separated into two groups. At the end of the year 1999 there were all in all 155 Bhikkhunīs in Sri Lanka. Both groups of Bhikkhunīs give ordination to women and girls in every year. I met the secretaries of these two groups personally to find out how many Bhikkhunīs belong to their groups. According to them the Bhikkhunīs in Sri Lanka now (2005) are more than four hundred. (See map of Sri Lanka in Appendix I). Apart from these Bhikkhunīs there is a big number of novice Bhikkhunīs presently under training to receive full ordination in the future.

4.3 Education of the Bhikkhunīs

To improve the knowledge on the Dhamma for the Bhikkhunīs and the novices Bhikkhunīs, two institutes have been established. One of them is the Advance of Bhikkhunīs Education Center which is located at Thalakiriyāgama Sri Buddha Jayanti Temple, 3 k.m away from the Dambulla temple. This center provides Primary and High Education Courses in line with the government approved syllabus of Pirivena Education system. Pirivenas are traditional temple schools for the education for the young monks and boys. The Pirivena education is an institution in Sri Lanka, which was started during the Anurādhapura period starting in third the century B.C, and still is in use today. It is responsible for the higher literacy rate in Sri Lanka from ancient times. Residential courses are conducted for the novice Bhikkhunīs who are looking forwards to receiving higher ordination. This education center is located a very peaceful environment.

The Bhikkhunī Educational Faculty is another educational institute for the Bhikkhunīs, and has been established at the Kalundawa area, at a location about 5 k.m from the Dambulla Temple in the Central Sri Lanka. In this institute, Bhikkhunīs students receive three month training for higher ordination. To enter the Bhikkhunī Educational Faculty, the applicants have to be applied through the provincial chairperson and the Secretary of the Sri Lanka Bhikkhunī Order. They also had to sit for written examinations and interviews. After being accepted the Bhikkhunīs students receive three months training on social activities, meditation methods, the English language and the good knowledge on the *Buddhadhamma*. Those who passed the final examination were qualified to receive Bhikkhunī higher Ordination. Another center for Bhikkhunī education is the Sakyadhita Sri Lankan Centre founded in 1993 at Pānadura.

In the meantime, some more Bhikkhunīs Training Centers have been established. They are Nawgala hermitage (Kegalla District), Millaniya (Horana-Kalutara District) and Eheliyagoda (Ratnepura District). In these centers 'Sāmaneris' (newcomers to the Sāsana) learn Buddhism, practice meditation and study Pāli, Sanskrit, Sinhala and English. They are also trained in family counseling, child and mother care, health and nutrition and even first aid which helps them to render a great service to the community.

4.4 Bhikkhunīs and Buddhists Lay people in Sri Lanka.

The good relationship between the Bhikkhunīs and the Buddhists lay people in Sri Lanka is developing day by day. Women devotees seek their kind advice not only on questions connected with Buddhism and meditation, but also on problems they are confronted with in their daily life. The younger generations especially are interested and support the Bhikkhunī movement. All the nunneries I visited receive support from young people. Young people are very much taken up by the way of life of the Bhikkhunīs and their activities. Talking to many people, I came to know that most of the lay followers in Sri Lanka had little knowledge on the reestablished Bhikkhunī Order in 1998 but observing the Bhikkhunis they feel pleased with them and try to support them. The women who live in the vicinity of Bhikkhunīs nunneries often visit the nunnery for chanting and other activities in the evening. The attitude of Buddhist people in general towards the Bhikkhunīs and their religious activities is growing very decidedly.

The Buddhists lay devotees are providing for the Bhikkhunīs and organizing traditional festivals as they always have for the Bhikkhus. For the rainy season retreat they invite the Bhikkhunīs to stay at the nunneries according to the Buddhist tradition. At the end of rainy season they offer new robes to the Bhikkhunīs and organize celebration. (See pictures I - III in Appendix II)

Bhikkhunīs are invited to participate in funeral ceremonies and to take part in many Buddhist traditional rituals such as the chanting of Pirit especially for pregnant women and to bless the new born babies.

4.5 Bhikkhunīs and their Religious Activities.

Bhikkhunīs attend religious activities just like monks without any distinctions. They are invited by lay devotees to carry out all the traditional Buddhist activities connected with merit making, delivering sermons and receiving alms. For all these activities in the past, only Bhikkhus were invited. In Sri Lankan society today people turn without distinction to Bhikkhus or Bhikkhunīs for their Buddhist rites and ceremonies.

4.5.1 The New Tasks Performed by Bhikkhunīs

There were a few tasks that can not be performed by DSMs because they were not officially ordained. They cannot officiate, for

example, at the *Sānghika Dāna* which is an alms giving to a group of five or more members of the Sangha believed to grant great merit to the donor and the performance of funeral ceremonies. The Bhikkhunīs now are fully qualified to take part in funeral ceremonies and to receive *Sānghika Dāna*. (See picture II in Appendix II)

The traditional Pāli phrase addressing monks on such occasions as giving *Sānghika Dāna* or receiving gifts at funeral ceremonies have now been changed dramatically to suite the difference gender when Bhikkhunīs were invited for such ceremonies. When the people offer food to the Bhikkhunīs they have to recite one Pāli sentence according to tradition. There are other occasions when people also recite some Pāli sentence according to the situation.

Such changes we find at the higher ordination ceremony:- *Sunātu me* ***Bhikkhunī Sangho****, aham nāginī tissāya upasampadāpekkho,*

At the Dana ceremony:- *imam Bhikkham* ***Bhikkhunī Sanghassa*** *or* ***Ubhato sangassa*** *dema,*

At the Kathina ceremony:- *sunātu me* ***Bhikkhunī Sangho*** *idam Bhikkhunī Sanghassa kathina civaram uppannam,*

At the funeral ceremony:- *imam matakavattham* ***Bhikkhunī Sanghassa*** *dema*

When the monks and Bhikkhunīs attend the same ceremony they change the phrase is: *Bhikkhunī Sangho* into *Ubhato Sanghassa*.

It is the customs in Sri Lanka that before monks enter the house their feet are washed by a male member of the family. When Bhikkhunīs enter the house this is now done by a female member of the family. (See picture IV in the Appendix II)

Officiating at funeral ceremonies is perhaps the most important of the religious functions of the Sangha. In an article Prof. Mrs. Hema Goonatilake said:- ‘since the restoration of the Bhikkhunī Order, there have been only a few instances of the Bhikkhus and the Bhikkhunīs participating together at funeral ceremonies. It is significant that by the end of the year 2000, however, there had been at least five instances

where the villagers invited both the Bhikkhus and the Bhikkhunīs. They offered seats with the same height on either side of the dead body, and both groups chanted together.' What I found out during my field observation in 2005 is that most of the Buddhist people are now often inviting Bhikkhus and Bhikkhunīs together for the funeral ceremonies and the *Sānghika Dāna*. (See picture II in the Appendix II)

4.6 The Bhikkhunīs and Official Religious Acts

After the first team of Sri Lankan Bhikkhunīs had received ordination, the training for new Bhikkhunīs was divided into two sections:- the pre-ordination and post-ordination. Like the Bhikkhus, the Bhikkhunīs are required to perform certain official religious acts, such as the fortnightly *Pātimokkha* recitation (discussion of any violation of the rules for the Bhikkhunīs) and the annual *Kathina* (robes) ceremony. The Bhikkhunīs after having received higher ordination are required to assemble from time to time to get guidance on official religious practices and on how to maintain a collective spirit and stability of the lineage. A code of ethics for the Bhikkhunīs with detailed instruction on the observance of monastic practices was instituted. Wahakula Vinayadhārinī, the a Bhikkhunī heading one nunnery said that ' all Bhikkhunīs once a month go to the main center to perform official religious acts after receiving the guidance from the senior monk of the temple'

Already six Simā Mālakas (a hall with a demarcated boundary, especially constructed for performing ecclesiastical acts) attached to the Bhikkhunī Ārāmas have been constructed in different parts of the country. The Bhikkhunīs who live in the vicinity of these Sīma Mālakas get together to perform bi-weekly Pātimokkha ceremonies. Other Bhikkhunīs use the Sīmā Mālakas of Bhikkhus with their permission.

4.7 Responsibilities of the Bhikkhunīs in Sri Lanka.

The Bhikkhunīs of the new Bhikkhunīs Sangha in Sri Lanka are engaging themselves in developing their Ārāmas and their status in the Buddhist society. Building up the Ārāmas and training the new Sāmaneries for higher ordination are the main responsibilities of the senior Bhikkhunīs. Apart from that the Bhikkhunīs do religious activities of different kinds when requested by the people.

The Bhikkhunī Rahatungoda Saddhāsumanā told me that "as a preceptor she has to supervise all Bhikkhunīs under her care. When new applications are received from girls and women who wish to become Bhikkhunīs, the examination are conducted at the Bhikkhunī Training Academy followed by training the applicant to be qualified for ordination.

In their social activities, the Bhikkhunīs visit poor families and organize meetings to discuss their problems and teach them the Buddhist way of life especially in rural areas. They also visit elderly people who are living alone and teach the Dhamma at Sunday schools to children. Their main duty, they feel, is to win the confidence and respect from the ordinary people, added Bhikkhunī Saddhāsumanā.

4.8 The Great Contribution of the Bhikkhunīs to develop Buddhism.

Most of the Buddhist scholars and monks in Sri Lanka are in favor of the established new Bhikkhunī Order. They are of the opinion that the participation of women in social and religious affairs is very welcome at this stage in Sri Lanka. Women who are now allowed to enter the order and get due recognition are able to render a great service to the country. At this time thousands of women are in distress because of the untimely death of their husbands and sons who got involved in the present ethnic conflict or who is neglected by their husbands, having no one to guide them to a peaceful life. This present situation in Sri Lanka has prompted the Christian movement to convert Buddhists to the Christian faith, as there are many villages in the country where the people are unable to find even a single monk for their religious guidance. It is a fact that the present order of monks in Sri Lanka is rapidly decreasing in number and in our modern time young boys and men are not willing anymore to become monks and lead a religious life. In this situation the Bhikkhunīs are very welcome to guide and help the Buddhist lay followers.

Prof. Senarath Wijesundara who is a lecturer at the Keleniya University gave his opinions on the present situation of Buddhism in Sri Lanka. He wrote that in our present era very few people are willing to dedicate their lives to pave the path to Nirvana. Many ladies who are willing to become Bhikkhunīs need to be encouraged in their endeavor as they will greatly help to keep the Dhamma, the Buddhist way of life and

the Buddhist tradition of the people alive. The Bhikkhunīs will be an important force to advance the welfare of Buddhism in the country. Denying women the rights to become Bhikkhunīs will only continue the frustration and dissatisfaction of these Buddhist women.

4.9 Problems found in the Bhikkhunī Order

Six years after the reestablishment of the Bhikkhunī Order, there are still some problems outstanding to be solved. The Mahānāyakas in Sri Lanka have not approved the reestablished Bhikkhunī Order and its validity is not universally accepted. Because of the Mahānāyakas' opposition, the government of Sri Lanka does not also officially accept the Order of Bhikkhunīs. But in the unofficially issued Identity cards and passport to Buddhist nuns their status is clearly defined as Bhikkhunīs. Universities are also following these trends and issue certificates to Buddhist nuns in full recognition of their status as Bhikkhunīs.

The above is the evidence that the government of Sri Lanka has accepted the Bhikkhunī Order without the official approval of the Mahānāyakas. However, there is no government education center for the training of the Bhikkhunīs. For the Bhikkhus the government has started many Pirivena in every District of Sri Lanka to give good education to the monks but had failed so far to start sufficient institutions for the training of Bhikkhunīs.

When Bhikkhunīs receive scholarship from the government, their status as the Bhikkhunīs is not acknowledged in the document as the government has not officially recognized the reestablished Order on advice of Mahānāyakas. For the same reasons the newspapers, television or radio channels do the same and most of the monks in Sri Lanka avoid addressing the Bhikkhunīs by using the title of Bhikkhunīs. However, the monks who are supporting the reestablished Bhikkhunī Order are rapidly increasing in number. This situation does not take into account the general acceptance and support to the Bhikkhunīs by the Buddhist lay devotees.

The Ven. Sumangala announced that he will not accept the non-acceptance of the reestablished Bhikkhunī Order by the Mahānāyakas and the government and points out that neither the Mahānāyakas nor the government has, according to the *Buddhadhamma*, the authority to deny

the recognition of the reestablished Bhikkhunī Order. In his view it is a matter for a Sangha council to be decided upon.

Chapter V

Conclusion and Suggestions

5.1 Conclusion

The Bhikkhunī Order, which was introduced to Sri Lanka by the daughter of Indian emperor Asoka in 236 B.C. survived until the end of Anurādhapura period in the 11th Century A.C. It disappeared from Sri Lanka mainly owing to the destructive influence of South Indian Cholian invaders.

It is recorded that before the disappearance of the Bhikkhunī Order from Sri Lanka the Order was introduced to China in 432 A.C by a group of Sri Lankan Bhikkhunīs. It was never introduced to other Theravāda countries such as Thailand, Laos, Cambodia, and Burma. This significant event in the history of Buddhism comes to us only from Chinese sources. It was not mentioned in Sri Lankan chronicles or other Sri Lankan sources. As pointed out by the prominent Buddhist scholar Prof. Hema Goonatilake, Bhikkhunīs who went to China were from the untraditional Abhayagiri monastery and the traditional monks of the Mahāvihāra who compiled the Singhalese chronicle *Mahāvamsa* were therefore not in favor to report about it. The traditional monks of the Mahāvihāra did not mention this important event in the Mahāvamsa.

Before the year 1998, two groups of monks and prominent Buddhist scholars argued on the subject of the reestablishment of the Bhikkhunī Order in Sri Lanka according to Therāvada tradition. The first

group headed by the four Sangha leaders of the three Nikāyās argued that the reestablishing the Bhikkhunī Order is not possible. Their main argument against the reestablishment is the lineage of the Order, which has been broken. According to Theravada tradition women should be first ordained by Bhikkhunis and then by Bhikkhus. Since the Theravāda Bhikkhunī Order does not exist in any of the Theravāda Buddhist countries any more, there is no possibility to have women ordained by Bhikkhunīs first and the Order can, therefore, not be .reestablished. The second group of prominent monks headed by the Ven. I. Sumangala, the chief incumbent of the ancient Dambulla temple of the Siyām Nikāya put forward his opinion claiming that the reestablishment of the Bhikkhunī Order according to Theravāda tradition is possible. This group claimed that the Bhikkhunī Order in China was established by Sinhalese Bhikkhunīs in accordance with the Theravāda Vinaya rules and it is known that the Bhikkhunī Order continued in China, Korea and Taiwan in an unbroken succession. Therefore, it is possible to reestablish the Bhikkhunī Order with the help of Bhikkhunīs from one of these countries.

According to the Vinaya text there are eight ways of ordination for Bhikkhus and Bhikkhunīs depending on special situations. They are:-

1. *Ehi Bhikkhu Pabbajjā* ("come Bhikkhu" – ordination by the Buddha)
2. *Tīni saranāgamana* (ordination by taking refuge in the Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha)
3. *Ovāda patiggahana* (ordination by taking advice)
4. *Pañhavyākaranena* (ordination by answering the questions)
5. *Atthagarudhamma patiññata* (ordination by accepting Eight Garudhammas)
6. *Dūtena upasampadā* (ordination confirmed by Messenger)
7. *Ñatti catutta kamma* (ordination by Ecclesiastical vote of monks)
8. *Atthavācika* (ordination confirmed by Bhikkhunīs and Bhikkus)

The first group bases their arguments on the way of ordination requiring Bhikkhunīs and Bhikkhus as this was the way traditionally done in Sri Lanka before the Bhikkhunī Order disappeared. They ignore the other ways of giving ordination mentioned in the Vinaya Pitaka.

The second group laid by the Ven Sumangala recognizes the validity of all eight ways of administering *Upasampadā* ordinations and therefore argues that the Bhikkhunī Order can be reestablished under

present conditions. They say that in all Theravāda countries today Bhikkhus can give *Upasampadā* ordination to ladies without any difficulties. Their willingness is all what is required.

The Bhikkhunī Order reestablished in Sri Lanka in the year 1998 by the Second group was not recognized and accepted by the first group. This is the situation even today. The ideas of the first group especially those of the four Sangha leaders, have not changed up to now. However some senior monks of the first group have come forward with the views that the Bhikkhunī Order could be reestablished without any assistance of Mahāyāna Bhikkhunīs as the Buddha clearly says in the *Chullavagga Pāli* of *Vinaya Pitaka* ' I permit you, monks, to confer ordination on women'.

In order to find a solution to the controversial problem of reestablishing the Bhikkhunī Order we have to review the validity of Sri Lankan Buddhist ordination tradition according to the *Buddhadhamma*.

For a long time different traditions have developed in Theravāda Buddhist countries. For instance in Sri Lanka the three Nikāyās called Siyām, Amarapura and Rāmañña have each created the institutions of a Mahānāyaka. The Mahānāyakās are traditionally accepted as leaders of the Sangaha since a long time. They have more or less ruled over the Sangha in Sri Lanka. Their decisions, however, have often been dictated by political influence, caste consideration and ownership of land. They traditionally acted as adviser to the King and nowadays to the government.

According to the *Mahāparinibbāna Sutta* of DN the Buddha refused to appoint a successor when He was asked to do so before passing into *Parinirvāna*. The Buddha clearly refused to appoint a successor and said the Sangha should be guided not by any person but by the Dhammma.

The group of people who supported the reestablished Bhikkhunī Sangha have therefore often pointed out that the Mahānāyakās have no authority to speak and advice on behalf of the Sangha and have explained that the Bhikkhunī Sangha was reestablished in full recognition of the rules laid down by the Buddha. According to the *Cullavagga* of the *Vinaya Pitaka*, Monks received permission from the Buddha to give higher ordination to women. This rule was altered in a later period of the

life time of the Buddha, as a problem had come up when women received ordination from monks.

It is evident in the *Cullavagga* that women who were aspired to become Bhikkhunīs at the time of the Buddha in India felt shy to answer the questions about their state of health when asked by the monks as required in the ordination ceremony. To solve this problem the Buddha laid down the rule that when giving ordination to women should be asked by Bhikkhunīs. Thereby the dual ordination ceremony was introduced.

This ordination method for women had been followed in the Theravāda tradition ever since. When in the year 1998 the Bhikkhunī Order was reestablished in Sri Lanka, the dual ordination system was used with the support of Mahāyāna Bhikkhunīs who have followed an ordination tradition started by Sri Lankan Bhikkhunīs in 432 A.C in China and it was kept alive in their tradition.

From the result of research and discussions on the issue of the reestablishing of the Bhikkhunī Order, the following four methods which are parts of the eight methods and which are found in the *Vinaya Pitaka* are well suitable to be applied to the present conditions of modern society.

1. Using the permission given by the Buddha to confer the ordination on women by monks only.
2. Performing dual ordination with the assistance of Mahāyāna Bhikkhunīs who have continued the ordination tradition given to them by Sri Lankan Theravāda Bhikkhunīs in 432 A.C.
3. As suggested by the prominent Buddhist scholar Prof. G.P Malalasekara, women who take refuge in the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha, observe the precepts and lead a celibate life are to be respected and considered to be Bhikkhunīs.
4. As some senior monks in Sri Lanka suggest the ordination to Bhikkhunīs can be given by Bhikkhus in any of the Therāvada countries as was permitted by the Buddha. The willingness by the Bhikkhunīs to do so is all that is required.

In the case of using any of the above four methods to reestablish the Bhikkhunī Order we should take great care. The third method as suggested by Prof. G.P Malalasekara could be very harmful for the continuation of the Buddhist Order. As an organization the Sangha has

developed an administration which governs many activities of its members. If the third method of ordination is adopted these administration cannot be continued which could cause disruption of the unity of the Sangha which goes against the advice of the Buddha. This is also in my view a dangerous possibility which must be avoided.

In 1998 when the Bhikkhunī Order was reestablished, the Ven. I. Sumangala had followed the traditional method of dual ordination practiced by Theravāda monks although there is permission in Vinaya text to give ordination to women only by monks.

The Ven Sumangala said that the Bhikkhus were given the authority by the Buddha to ordain ladies without the help of the Bhikkhunīs and no one is entitled to deny the right of women to enter the Sangha. The Buddha also allowed the monks to do away with Minor Vinaya rules if necessary. The way of the dual ordination considering the reason which leads to this rule can be considered as a minor rule. It has no bearing at all on the proper way of and discipline of the Bhikkhunīs.

The reestablished Bhikkhunī Order has now lasted over six years. Many of the monks and the majority of the Buddhist lay devotees are in favor of it. Further more, the Bhikkhunī Sangha can help to over come the problems existing in some Buddhist societies experiencing a lack of monks to guide them as many young men in modern society are not willing to enter the order. Further more, women devotees who affected by many problems can not easily be addressed by monks but very well by Bhikkhunīs. The Bhikkhunī Order can also prevent conversion of the Buddhists to Christianity which is actively undertaken by Christian organizations to cash in on the above mentioned problems. Christian organizations use Christian schools and universities to spread their beliefs. Buddhist schools in which Bhikkhunīs teach can check these activities

At present, the Bhikkhunī Order in Sri Lanka is spreading rapidly to all parts of the country. The development of the Bhikkhunī Order is well supported by the Buddhist lay people who have difficulties to fulfill their religious activities as there are not enough monks to guide them. This contribution of the Bhikkhunīs to the Buddhist society has greatly supported to develop the faith of the people in the Triple Gems.

The government of Sri Lanka on the advise of the Mahānāyakas does not officially recognize the Order of Bhikkhunīs but issues official Identity cards and passports to Buddhist nuns in which their status is clearly defined as Bhikkhunīs. Universities are also following these trend and issue certificates to Buddhist nuns in full recognition of their status as Bhikkhunīs.

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The attitude of the Buddhist people in Sri Lanka towards the Bhikkhunīs is a very important factor. They are of the views that whoever lives a righteous life well disciplined and well educated in the *Buddhadhamma* and doing good service to develop the spiritual side of life, should be respected by everybody irrespective of the gender and traditional ways of ordination. Sri Lankan Buddhist society has thereby opened the door to everyone to reconsider their objection to the reestablishment of the Bhikkhunī Order.

This is the time for all Buddhists to get together and discuss this issue. It may be the time for a council of the Sangha to convene and decide on the reestablished Bhikkhunī Order. The Sangha council can officially do away with rules which are minor and have no direct influence on the discipline and purity of the Sangha. As the need to reestablish the Bhikkhunī Order is felt not only in Sri Lanka but also in other Theravāda countries as well a Sangha council in which those in favor and those against are equally represented could decide on the matter for the whole of the Theravāda Sangha.

5.2 Suggestions for Future Studies

The topic of this thesis is the reestablishment of the Bhikkhunī Order in Sri Lanka. Sri Lanka is one of the Theravāda Buddhist countries. Some educated Buddhist women in many of the Theravāda countries come forward to work for the establishing of the Bhikkhunī Order in their respective countries. Many of them feel to do this with the support of Sri Lankan Bhikkhunīs. This attempt to establish the Bhikkhunī Order in other Theravāda countries may be more difficult as no Bhikkhunī Order has ever existed there. For them it is a new beginning in their Buddhist traditions which will require not only the willingness of the Bhikkhu Sangha but also the active support from the lay people and a complete study and close examination of all rules laid down by the Buddha for the ordination of women.

The eight rules which apply to the ordination of women in different conditions are the bases of all considerations and decisions on the reestablishment of the Bhikkhunī Order in Theravāda countries. The Sangha and lay devotees in Theravāda countries should have complete knowledge of these rules. I suggest the eight rules (Appendix III) to be the topic of another thesis to be done by any of the students of the MCU. In this context it is also very important to be fully aware of the rule laid down by the Buddha that Bhikkhunīs have to receive at any time guidance from the Bhikkhus in all matters of their spiritual and mundane lives in the Sangha.

Observing how the re-established Bhikkhunī Order in Sri Lanka develops, how the general Buddhist population supports or ignores its survival and how the Bhikkhus react to its existence will be important to observe for many years to come. We have to see how the Bhikkhunī Order finds its proper place in present Buddhist societies and how the Sangha consisting of Bhikkhus and Bhikkhunīs preserves its unity in harmony and strict observation of the Vinaya-rules.

On the other hand research on the traditions of the Mahāyāna Order in China and other countries will be necessary to be able to compare the ordination rules and procedures with the Theravāda tradition. This was in the past very difficult to do, but with the newly developed information technology and the worldwide growing interest in the Teaching of the Buddha the suggested research will be of great value to develop mutual understanding between all Buddhists.

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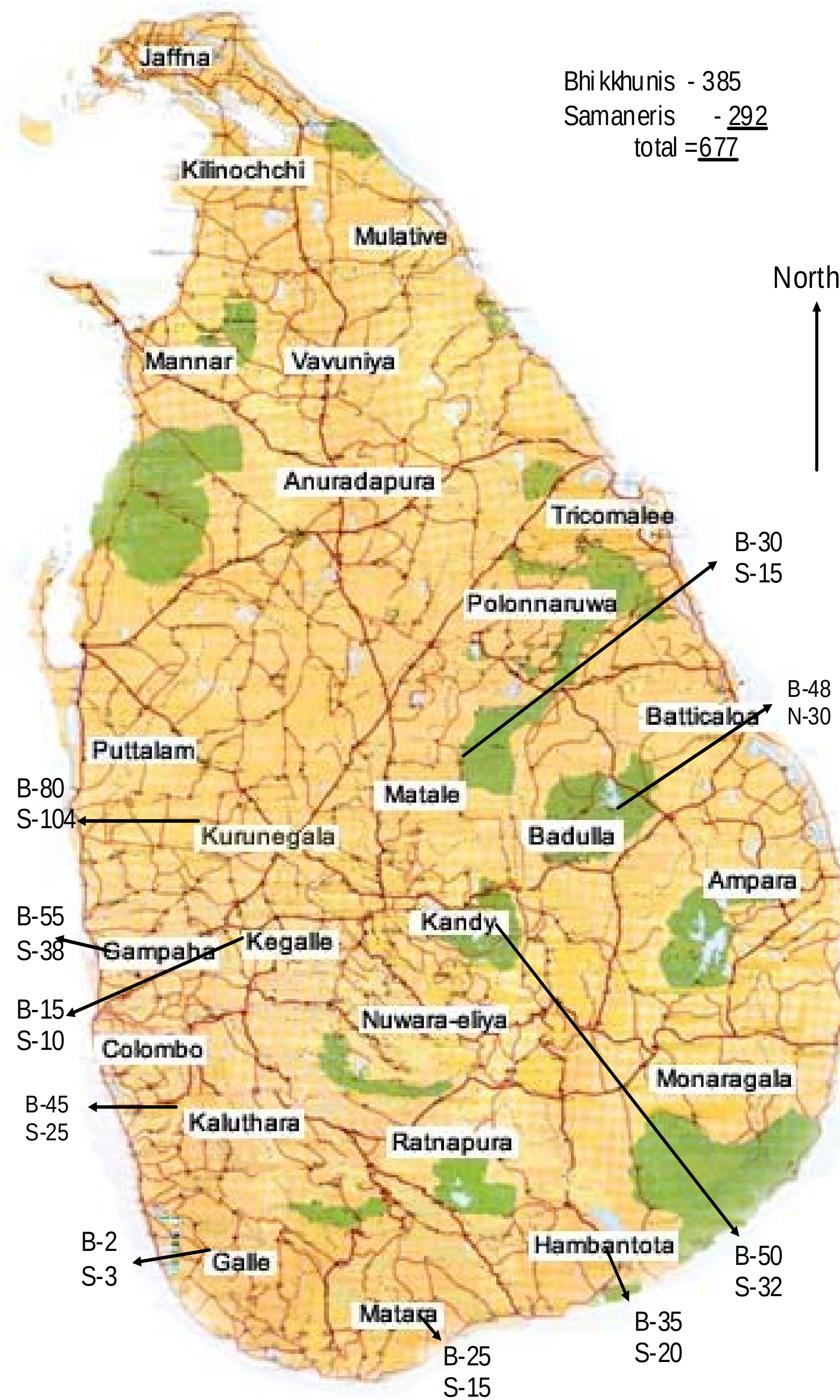
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Appendix I

The Population of Bhikkhunis and Samaneris in Sri Lanka in District Level
Dated to 2004 December



Appendix II

Picture I (Bhikkhunīs at the Kathina Ceremony- 2004)



Picture II (Bhikkhus and Bhikkhunīs at the Sanghika Dāna occasion)



Picture III (People offer robes to the Bhikkhunīs)



Picture IV (one girl washes the feet of Bhikkhunīs before entering the house)



Picture V (A group photo the researcher with Bhikkhunīs in Sri Lanka)



Appendix III

1. The Eight Garudhammās

According to the Bhikkhunī Khandhaka of the Vinaya Pitaka the Buddha laid down the Eight Garudhammās when Mahā Pajāpatigotami requested to be ordained as Bhikkhunī. Her simple acceptance of the Eight Garudhammās was considered to be her ordination. This was the first and last time that the simple acceptance of the Eight Garudhammās was considered to be an ordination. From that time onward the Eight Garudhammas were applied when women wanted to become Bhikkhunīs

1. Even if a Bhikkhunī were hundred years senior in the order, she must pay respects, worship with clasped bands on the head, and perform relevant duties to the Bhikkhu ordained even one day. This must be kept life long.

2. If a Bhikkhunī spends a rainy season in a monastery where there are no Bhikkhus, she commits a Pācittiya offence.

3. Every half month the Bhikkhunīs must approach the Bhikkhus and inquire about the recitation of Pātimokkha, and expect the visit of a Bhikkhu to give counsel. This rule must be observed so long as life lasts.

4. After completing the rains retreat, the Bhikkhunīs must confess what they saw, heard, or suspected, before the dual order.

5. A Bhikkhunī who commits a grave offence, must redeem herself before the dual Order.

6. A Sikkhamāna who has practiced six precepts for two years should be ordained before the dual Order.

7. A Bhikkhunī must not in any way abuse or insult a Bhikkhu.

8. Bhikkhunīs must refrain from commanding Bhikkhus by way of speech. Bhikkhus may not refrain from commanding Bhikkhunīs by way of speech.

Some Buddhist scholars argue that the Buddha never laid down any Vinaya Rules without being caused to it by an objectionable conduct of a member of the Sangha.

They dispute therefore that the Eight Garudhammās are a later addition to the Vinaya Rules

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